



603620



TO  
MAHATMA GANDHI







MAHATMA GANDHI

# THE WARDHA SCHEME OF EDUCATION

*EXPOSITION AND EXAMINATION*

C. J. VARKEY

K.S.G., M.A., M.L.A.

*Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education  
Government of Madras*

With a Foreword by

DR ZAKIR HUSAIN, PH.D.

*Principal, Jamia Milia Islamia, Delhi  
Chairman, Wardha Education Committee and  
President, Hindustani Talimi Sangh*

and an Introduction by

THE HONBLE DR P. SUBBARAYAN  
M.A., B.C.L., LL.D., Bar-at-Law, M.L.A.

*Minister for Education, Government of Madras*



HUMPHREY MILFORD  
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

1939

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS  
AMEN HOUSE, LONDON, E.C. 4  
EDINBURGH GLASGOW NEW YORK  
TORONTO MELBOURNE CAPETOWN  
BOMBAY CALCUTTA MADRAS  
HUMPHREY MILFORD  
PUBLISHER TO THE  
UNIVERSITY

*First published January 1939*

PRINTED IN INDIA  
AT THE DIOCESAN PRESS, MADRAS—1939. C6937

## FOREWORD

THE inception, propagation and final shaping of an idea is always an interesting and instructive object of study. The story of how the new theory of Basic National Education came to be embodied in a scheme has to be studied for the additional reason that it has been a controversial issue through all its phases, and there are not wanting lovers of the past who still see in the scheme dangers and snares and complications that suggested themselves to their timid imaginations when the foundations of the scheme were being planned and laid.

Mr Varkey has rendered a great service to the cause of Basic National Education by blowing away the smoke and dust of controversy that hung around some of its phases. But, of course, experience will suggest improvement of the scheme, and the smoke and dust of controversy will continue to rise. Mr Varkey has answered a host of just the kind of questions people commonly ask and has thus settled a host of misconceptions and doubts. But people will never stop asking questions and expecting you to answer them. The next edition of this book will probably be more bulky!

DELHI

ZAKIR HUSAIN

*15 December 1938*



## PREFACE

THE idea of writing this book originated from a happy suggestion made by the Honble Dr P. Subbarayan, Minister for Education, Government of Madras. Having seen that people criticized the Wardha Scheme of Education in the press and from the platform without an adequate knowledge of the subject, he suggested that I might undertake to publish, in book form, the proceedings of the Wardha Educational Conference, as well as the Reports and Syllabuses of the Zakir Husain Committee, prefacing the whole with an Introduction explaining the principles and features of the scheme.

While the plan of such a book was being drawn up, two publications made their appearance in quick succession. The first of these was *Educational Reconstruction*, and the second was *Basic National Education*. These publications contained only the bare Reports and Syllabuses of the Zakir Husain Committee. The former published in addition the proceedings of the Wardha Conference, as well as some extracts from the writings of Gandhiji in the *Harijan*.

It was, nevertheless, felt that there was room and need for yet another, independent, treatise which would explain the underlying principles, describe the details of the scheme, solve difficulties, answer queries and refute criticisms. The public, teachers and officers of Education Departments are all seeking for fresh light on this novel system of education. This little volume is, therefore, intended to meet a distinct

demand at the present moment. In fact, as Dr Subbarayan has observed in the Introduction, the book 'will be of great use not merely to teachers, but also to administrators in understanding the problem in all its aspects'.

The principal aim of the book is to interpret the mind of Mahatmaji, the originator of the scheme, and to portray the ideas and ideals of his system of national education intended to inaugurate a new era in India. How far the Zakir Husain Committee has accepted or modified the scheme as originally formulated by Gandhiji, and how far the Central Advisory Board of Education at Delhi has recently suggested further modifications, have also been pointed out. In the course of the examination of the scheme, as a teacher of twenty-three years' experience, I have, here and there, offered practical suggestions for adapting the scheme to varying local conditions. The chapters on 'Queries' and 'Criticisms' are not supposed to be exhaustive; but an attempt has been made to answer the most important ones. The public as well as teachers and administrators will be specially interested in the chapters on 'The Wardha Syllabus' and 'The Wardha Experiment', which help to throw further light on the practical aspects of the scheme. A few pictures have been included to illustrate the life and work of the Training School at Wardha.

I am very grateful to Dr Subbarayan for his suggestion and for his encouragement to write this book, and particularly for revising the manuscript and writing the Introduction. I am also thankful to the Rev Fr D. J. Albuquerque, S.J., Professor of English, St Aloysius College, Mangalore, for going

through the manuscript and suggesting verbal improvements. I would also like to thank the Oxford University Press, which has always shown a special interest in bringing out works on Indian topics and problems.

In a special manner have I to express my gratitude to Dr Zakir Husain for his kindness in writing the Foreword and for his appreciation of this modest attempt to further the cause of national education.

FORT ST GEORGE

C. J. VARKEY

MADRAS

*18 December 1938*



# CONTENTS

	PAGE
FOREWORD ... ..	v
PREFACE ... ..	vii
INTRODUCTION ... ..	xv
CHAPTER	
I. HISTORY OF THE SCHEME ...	1
§1. Introduction ... ..	1
§2. The Wardha Conference ...	2
(a) <i>Agenda.</i> (b) <i>Proceedings.</i>	
(c) <i>Resolutions.</i>	
§3. The Committee ... ..	8
§4. Reports and Syllabuses ...	10
(a) <i>The First Report.</i> (b) <i>The Second Report.</i>	
II. GANDHIJI'S IDEAS ON EDUCATION ...	15
§1. Defects of the Present System ...	15
§2. True Education ... ..	17
§3. Two Propositions ... ..	18
§4. His Convictions ... ..	19
APPENDIX: Mahatma Gandhi's Inaugural Address at the Wardha Conference ...	21
III. FUNDAMENTAL FEATURES OF THE SCHEME ... ..	28
§1. Manual and Productive Craft ...	28
(a) <i>Its Meaning.</i> (b) <i>A Misconception.</i>	
(c) <i>Its Feasibility.</i>	
§2. Self-supporting Education ...	33
(a) <i>Its Twofold Meaning.</i> (b) <i>Raison d'être of the Idea.</i> (c) <i>Feasibility of the Idea.</i>	
§3. Seven Years Compulsory Education ...	41
(a) <i>Contrast with the Present System.</i>	

CHAPTER	PAGE
<p>(b) <i>Duration of Compulsory Education.</i>  (c) <i>Age-limits for Compulsion.</i> (d)  <i>Justification for Seven Years Compulsion.</i></p>	
§4. Emphasis on Indian Languages ...	46
(a) <i>Mother-Tongue.</i> (b) <i>Hindustani.</i>	
§5. The Cult of Non-Violence ...	50
IV. SECONDARY FEATURES OF THE SCHEME ...	53
§1. Matriculation Standard ...	53
§2. Different Steps in Education ...	56
§3. State to Buy Products of Children's Labour ...	58
§4. Relationship with Life ...	60
§5. Ideal of Citizenship ...	61
V. WARDHA SCHOOL TEACHERS ...	64
§1. Special Teachers and Books ...	64
§2. Selection of Teachers ...	67
(a) <i>Two Suggestions.</i> (b) <i>Standard of Attainments.</i> (c) <i>Present Teachers.</i> (d) <i>Women Teachers.</i>	
§3. Conscription and Persuasion ...	72
(a) <i>Conscription.</i> (b) <i>Persuasion.</i>	
§4. Courses of Training ...	75
(a) <i>Two Courses.</i> (b) <i>A Shorter Course.</i>	
VI. QUERIES ON THE SCHEME ...	77
(1) Can everything be taught through a craft?	
(2) Why is special emphasis laid on spinning and weaving?	
(3) Cannot other handicrafts also be adopted as Basic Crafts?	
(4) Can one school teach all or many crafts?	
(5) What about advanced courses in these crafts?	

CHAPTER	PAGE
(6) Are seven years needed to study a craft?	
(7) Will there be other types of schools?	
(8) What will happen to the present schools?	
(9) Can this system succeed in cities and towns?	
(10) What about college education?	
VII. CRITICISMS OF THE SCHEME ...	88
§1. The Theory of Self-supporting Education ...	89
(1) <i>Duty of the State.</i> (2) <i>Waste of Raw Materials.</i> (3) <i>Sale of School Products.</i> (4) <i>Factory Labour.</i>	
§2. Craft-centred Education ...	93
(5) <i>Culture Neglected.</i> (6) <i>Unbalanced Time-table.</i> (7) <i>A Dull Course of Education.</i> (8) <i>Premature Specialization and Choice of Career.</i>	
§3. Teachers' Problems ...	100
(9) <i>Hardship for Teachers.</i> (10) <i>Teachers' Pay.</i> (11) <i>Teachers' Training.</i> (12) <i>Lack of Teachers.</i>	
§4. Omissions in the Scheme ...	105
(13) <i>Pre-Wardha Education.</i> (14) <i>Neglect of English.</i> (15) <i>Neglect of Physical Education.</i> (16) <i>Neglect of Religion.</i>	
§5. Other Points of Criticism ...	112
(17) <i>Number of School Days.</i> (18) <i>Migration from Villages to Towns.</i> (19) <i>Check on Industrial Progress.</i> (20) <i>Gandhiji is thrusting the scheme on the country.</i>	
VIII. THE WARDHA SYLLABUS ...	119
§1. The Basic Craft ...	119
<i>Process of Correlation.</i>	

CHAPTER	PAGE
§2. Advancement of Culture ...	131
(a) <i>Syllabus in Social Studies.</i> (b)	
<i>Syllabus in General Science.</i>	
IX. THE WARDHA EXPERIMENT ...	148
§1. The Training School ...	149
(a) <i>Administration.</i> (b) <i>Training</i>	
<i>Courses.</i>	
§2. The Practising School ...	152
§3. Productive Manual Work ...	153
§4. Attainments of Pupils ...	154
APPENDIX: The Vidya Mandir School ...	157
X. CONCLUSION ...	161
§1. Originality of the Scheme ...	161
§2. Benefits of the Scheme ...	163
(a) <i>Liquidation of illiteracy.</i> (b) <i>Free</i>	
<i>clementary and secondary education.</i>	
(c) <i>Poverty of Indian villages.</i> (d)	
<i>Practical Education.</i>	
§3. Imprimatur of the Congress ...	167
§4. Support of the Central Advisory Board	
of Education ...	170
§5. Hope and Appeal ...	174

## INTRODUCTION

**THIS** is the first book dealing constructively with the scheme adumbrated by Mahatmaji with regard to the reorganization of elementary education in this country. The basic principle underlying the scheme is teaching through a craft. It was considered at a conference held at Wardha under the auspices of the Marwari Education Society in October 1937 with Mahatmaji himself as President. It was attended by well-known educationists and by Ministers of the various Congress Provinces including Mr B. G. Kher, the Prime Minister of Bombay. It was welcomed on all hands, and the educationists present at the Conference felt that a new era had begun in the field of elementary education.

As was said recently by Lord Hailey in London: 'British rule in India has not succeeded in solving the problem of literacy, and organization of education began at the wrong end. The Company Government, having in mind the question of competent men to run the administration in the lower ranks, devoted their thought to higher education rather than elementary education.' In this country, therefore, the Universities came first: primary education was relegated to the background, and was considered only as a stepping-stone to secondary schools and university education. The problem of the removal of mass illiteracy was never considered at all, but with the growth of governmental organization, education of the masses had eventually to be considered. The finances of the country did not allow the tackling of the problem on the vast scale it required. As Lord Hailey has said: 'There are many who will readily agree that the conduct of education

is one of the less happy features of our rule in India. Britain's mistake lay in the wide expansion of academic secondary education, before she had laid a sound basis for primary education.'

The new democratic Governments which have now come into being have naturally to look at education from a different angle altogether. Mahatmaji's contribution to it is not a day too late, and all our Governments, not merely Congress Governments, are beginning to turn their attention to this scheme. The Central Advisory Board of Education appointed a committee with the Prime Minister of Bombay as its Chairman and Dr Zakir Husain, the Chairman of the Wardha Education Committee, as one of its members. They went through the Wardha Scheme and have accepted the fundamental principles of the scheme as a concrete solution of the problem of elementary education.

Mr Varkey's book is the first attempt at a treatise on the scheme in all its aspects and brings to bear on it the ideas of an educationist. In a work of this kind he has naturally had to use the *Reports* of the Zakir Husain Committee and the writings of Mahatmaji on the scheme. He has succeeded in bringing before the public the essentials of the scheme by quoting, wherever possible, the recommendations in the Zakir Husain Committee's *Reports* and Mahatmaji's writings. The book, I feel sure, will fill a void in our literature on elementary education and help to focus attention on the essentials of the scheme.

Teaching through a craft may not be new, but Mahatmaji's idea is essentially new; and I may respectfully say that he has applied his great doctrine of non-violence and truth to the problem. Elementary

education as hitherto imparted in this country has never paid much attention either to the environment or to the aptitude of the pupils who go to school. There has been no attempt to educate our masters, as Gladstone once tersely put it, and to create in the pupils a civic consciousness which is so necessary for a democratic electorate. 'The three Rs' were the only consideration that was before educational authorities as a scheme of elementary education. It was good in the beginning, but as a solution of the problem it has become a failure. The huge wastage that goes on in the field of education has been well brought out in the report of the Hartog Committee. Mahatmaji's scheme which gives a complete course of basic education for seven years will help to solve this problem of wastage. The great difficulty is the availability of teachers who will understand the essentials of the scheme as now propounded.

Mr Varkey has visited the Training School at Wardha and has devoted a chapter to the working of the school and has shown how the teachers are being trained and what reaction the scheme has on the minds of the pupils who are at the model school of this institution.

All provincial Governments will approximate themselves gradually to the scheme when they have been able to train teachers to run schools on Wardha lines. Mr Varkey's book, I feel certain, will be of great use, not merely to teachers but also to administrators in understanding the problem in all its aspects. I wish the book all success.

FORT ST GEORGE

MADRAS

P. SUBBARAYAN

15 December 1938

*God did not create us to eat, drink and be merry, but to earn our bread in the sweat of our brow.—Gandhiji*  
(quoting from the Bible)

*Without the use of our hands and feet our brains would atrophy.—Gandhiji*

*The true development of the mind and the heart can be only through manual labour.—Acharya Kalelkar*

*The co-ordination of the hand and intellect is very much needed in our country.—The Honble Dr Syed Mahmud*

*The ideal of education is to bring out the best in man, to create a love for God and man.—The Honble Sri Vishwanathan Das*

*Nothing great in this world was ever accomplished without a living faith.—Gandhiji*

## CHAPTER I

# HISTORY OF THE SCHEME

### I. Introduction

DURING the past quarter of a century, there has developed in India a feeling of dissatisfaction with the system of education prevailing in the country. This feeling became intensified with the rise of Indian nationalism, and grew with the spread of national ideas and ideals of life. Thinking men began to subject the system of education to a careful scrutiny, and not being satisfied with it, expressed their desire to bring it into line with nationalism. They found that the existing system of education 'had failed to meet the most urgent and pressing needs of national life, and to organize and direct its forces and tendencies into proper channels'. This growing feeling is faithfully portrayed in the Zakir Husain *Report*, which says:

Today, when quick and far-reaching changes are reshaping both national and international life and making new demands on the citizens, it (the existing system of education) continues to function listlessly and apart from the real currents of life, unable to adapt itself to the changed circumstances. It is neither responsive to the realistic elements of the present situation, nor inspired by any life-giving and creative ideal. It does not train individuals to become useful productive members of society, able to pull their own weight and participate effectively in its work. It has no conception of the new co-operative

social order, which education must help to bring into existence, to replace the present competitive and inhuman regime based on exploitation and violent force.

National leaders throughout the country have, therefore, demanded the replacement of the present system of education by a more constructive and less inhuman system, which is adapted to the needs and ideals of our national life. Under this natural urge of the age, they have turned their attention to 'the question of evolving a system of education which will be in harmony with the genius of the Indian people, and solve the problem of mass education in a practical way and within as short a time as possible'. Among such national leaders, undoubtedly the most eminent and inspiring is Mahatma Gandhi. He has, of late, devoted himself wholeheartedly to the solution of the problem of national education, and has expounded his ideas on the question of giving a national orientation to education through numerous articles in various issues of the *Harijan* during the past year. And, with the courage and hope inspired by the establishment of national or popular Government in seven of the most important provinces, his farsighted leadership in the field of education has finally resulted in what is now popularly known as the Wardha Scheme of Education.

## II. The Wardha Conference

Gandhiji found a very favourable opportunity to push forward his scheme on the occasion of the celebration of the Silver Jubilee of the Marwari Education Society and of that Society's institution, once known as the Marwari High School at Wardha, but recently renamed

the Nava Bharat Vidyalaya. On that occasion, the management of the school conceived the happy idea of calling a small conference of nationally-minded educationists to consider the scheme of education which Mahatmaji had been propounding in the columns of the *Harijan*; and the secretary of the Society, Sri Shriman Narayan Agarwal, consulted him as to the desirability of convening such a conference, and asked him to preside over it, if he approved of the idea. Gandhiji was not averse to either of these suggestions. Accordingly, what ultimately became a momentous Educational Conference was held at Wardha on 22 and 23 October 1937, under the presidency of Mahatmaji. The Conference was not at all a spectacular one; it was purely a business meeting. Invitation was, therefore, extended to only a limited number among those who were deeply interested in the problem of national education and could make useful contributions to the discussion. Hence the conference was attended by some select educationists from all over India, as well as by all the Ministers for Education in the seven Congress Provinces. The proceedings were studiously business-like, and the speeches were, (with four exceptions) in Hindi or Hindustani.

(a) '*Agenda*. The agenda before the Conference consisted of the following propositions, originally formulated by Gandhiji, which contain in a nutshell his ideas on education in all its stages:

1. The present system of education does not meet the requirements of the country in any shape or form. English, having been made the medium of instruction in all the higher branches of learning, has created a permanent bar between the highly educated few and

the uneducated many. It has prevented knowledge from percolating to the masses. This excessive importance given to English has cast upon the educated classes a burden which has maimed them mentally for life and made them strangers in their own land. Absence of vocational training has made the educated classes almost unfit for productive work and harmed them physically. Money spent on primary education is a waste of expenditure inasmuch as what little is taught is soon forgotten and has little or no value in terms of the villages or cities. Such advantage as is gained by the existing system of education is not gained by the chief taxpayer, his children getting the least.

2. The course of primary education should be extended at least to seven years and should include the general knowledge gained up to the matriculation standard, less English and plus a substantial vocation.

3. For the all-round development of boys and girls all training should as far as possible be given through a profit-yielding vocation. In other words, vocations should serve a double purpose—to enable the pupil to pay for his tuition through the products of his labour, and at the same time to develop the whole man or woman in him or her through the vocation learnt at school.

Lands, buildings and equipment are not intended to be covered by the proceeds of the pupils' labour.

All the processes of cotton, wool and silk manufacture, commencing from gathering, cleaning, ginning (in the case of cotton), carding, spinning, dyeing, sizing, warp-making, double twisting, designing, and weaving, embroidery, tailoring, paper making and cutting, book binding, cabinet making, toy making, *gur* making are undoubted occupations that can easily be learnt and handled without much capital outlay.

This primary education should equip boys and girls to earn their bread by the State guaranteeing employment in the vocations learnt or by buying their manufactures at prices fixed by the State.

4. Higher education should be left to private enterprise and should be to meet national requirements whether in the various industries, technical arts, belles-lettres or fine arts.

The State Universities should be purely examining bodies, self-supporting through the fees charged for examinations.

Universities will look after the whole field of education and will prepare and approve courses of studies in the various departments of education. No private school should be run without the previous sanction of the respective Universities. University charters should be given liberally to any body of persons of proved worth and integrity, it being always understood that the Universities will not cost the State anything except the cost of running a Central Education Department.

(b) *Proceedings.* On the first day (22nd) the Conference met in the morning from 8-30 to 11-30 and in the afternoon from 2-30 to 5. The morning session commenced with the Address of Welcome by Seth Jamnalal Bajaj, President of the Marwari Education Society, followed by the Inaugural Address by Gandhiji, which lasted for about 85 minutes. Then followed speeches by eminent educationists and Education Ministers. In the afternoon, Gandhiji opened the session by answering some of the criticisms made by speakers in the morning session. The afternoon session, during which also several speeches were made, came to a close at 5 p.m. However, at 8 p.m. the Conference met in committee

under the chairmanship of Dr Zakir Husain, Principal, Jamia Milia, Delhi, to frame resolutions in the light of the day's discussion on the propositions which Gandhiji had placed before the Conference, expounding his ideas on education in all grades and stages. After a free and full discussion, four resolutions were drafted for submission to the session the next day (vide page 7).

On the second day (23rd) the Conference met again at 8 a.m., when Dr Zakir Husain submitted the four draft resolutions to the Conference. Mahatmaji read them aloud and said:

I am glad to know that almost all of you participated in the sitting last night. I know that the draft resolutions have been passed unanimously; still some differences of opinion are bound to remain. I would earnestly request any one who does not agree with my proposal to tell me so frankly. I do not want to impose my opinions on anybody. We have to sit together and thrash out some concrete scheme for national well-being in this hour of great need. I know that Prof Shah has his doubts about my proposal. It is quite natural, because he belongs to a different school of thought. I should like to hear his criticism first.

The Conference then converted itself into a committee to express its opinion on the various propositions originally formulated by Gandhiji and to consider the four draft resolutions framed the previous night on the basis of Gandhiji's propositions. Then followed a free and frank discussion, which began with the speech of Prof Shah, as desired by Gandhiji. Several educationists and all the Education Ministers present took part in the

discussion. A perusal of the speeches will convince any one that, though every one showed great respect for Gandhiji's opinions, they did speak out their doubts and difficulties as frankly as one could expect on such an occasion. At the end of the discussion, the four resolutions were put to the vote, when they were all unanimously accepted, only Prof Shah not accepting the self-supporting part of the resolutions.

Finally, Gandhiji wound up the proceedings, with these words: 'Now that we have Congress Ministers working in seven provinces, we shall have to tackle the problem with constructive seriousness.' He assured those present that 'there is nothing final about the Conference, as it is a Conference of seekers, and every one is invited to offer suggestions and criticisms. I have never had the idea of carrying through anything by storm'.

(c) *Resolutions.* Here is the text of the four resolutions which constitute the fundamental basis of the Wardha Scheme:

1. That in the opinion of this Conference free and compulsory education be provided for seven years on a nation-wide scale.
2. That the medium of instruction be the mother-tongue.
3. That the Conference endorses the proposal made by Mahatma Gandhi that the process of education throughout this period should centre around some form of manual and productive work, and that all the other abilities to be developed or training to be given should, as far as possible, be integrally related to the central handicraft chosen with due regard to the environment of the child.

4. That the Conference expects that this system of education will be gradually able to cover the remuneration of teachers.

### III. The Committee

Thereafter a committee, composed of the following persons, was appointed to prepare a detailed syllabus on the basis of the resolutions, and to submit their report and syllabus to Gandhiji, the President of the Conference, within a month. Before we proceed to examine the interesting report, it is worth while to see how far this committee of the Conference was fitted for the heavy and important task assigned to it, so that we may know what weight to attach to the report and the syllabus it submitted. That the committee was composed of persons really competent to speak authoritatively on the subject is apparent from the educational qualifications and experience of its members.

1. Dr Zakir Husain had his education in Germany. He is a Ph.D. of Berlin University and is a German scholar. He has been in charge of Jamia Milia Islamia of Delhi ever since its inception, and has thus considerable experience of primary and higher education.

2. Prof Khwaja Gulam Saiyidudeen is a B.A. and M.Ed. (Leeds) and is a Professor of Aligarh University.

3. Sri Vinoba Bhave has no academical qualifications, but is known for his profound learning and has had educational experience extending over 20 years.

4. Sri Kakasaheb Kalelkar has been an educationist all his life, having taught at Santiniketan, Satyagraha Ashram School, Sabarmati, and Gujarat Vidyapith. He was Principal of the last two. He is still teaching,

though not actually a professor or teacher. He is a graduate of Bombay University.

5. Sri Kishorlal Mashruwala is a B.A. and LL.B. of Bombay University, has taught at Satyagraha Ashram School at Sabarmati, and was Registrar and Professor of the Gujarat Vidyapith for many years. He has thought deeply on problems of education and has several educational books to his credit.

6. Srimati (Mrs) Asha Devi is a M.A. in Sanskrit of the Benares Hindu University. She was Principal of the Women's College of that University, and then Rector of Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan. She is now in charge of the Mahila Vidyalyaya at Wardha.

7. Sri Krishnadas Jajju, B.A., B.L., was Chairman of the Managing Board of the All-India Village Industries Association, and has a fund of practical experience in handicrafts, having also been long associated with the All-India Spinners' Association.

8. Prof K. T. Shah, B.A. (Bombay), B.Sc. (Lond.), Bar-at-Law, has had much to do with University education for many years. He is the author of a number of books on economics, and was a member of the Public Debt Inquiry Committee appointed by the Congress.

9. Sri J. C. Kumarappa is M.A. (Columbia), B.Sc. (Syracuse), and is an Incorporated Accountant. He abandoned a lucrative career as accountant in 1929 and joined the Gujarat Vidyapith as Professor of Economics. He carried out an economic survey of Matar Taluka in Gujarat, was on the Public Debt Inquiry Committee appointed by the Congress, and has been Secretary of the A.-I.V.I.A. ever since it was started.

10. Sri E. W. Aryanayakam had his training abroad, and is B.D., B.Ed. (Hons.) (Edin.), Diploma in

Education (Cantab.), and F.R.S.A. He was for long Rector of Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, and Secretary to the poet Rabindranath Tagore, and then Principal of the Nava Bharat Vidyalaya at Wardha. Now he is Chairman of the Committee of the Vidya Mandir Training School at Wardha.

#### IV. Reports and Syllabuses

(a) *The First Report.* In accordance with the resolution of the Conference, the committee submitted to Mahatmaji its first report in December 1937 and a second report in April 1938. From the covering letter, addressed to Gandhiji and dated 12 December 1937, we gather that the committee had several sittings—first a preliminary discussion with Gandhiji on 24 October, i.e. the day after the Conference, then regular meetings on the 2nd and 3rd of November; and again on the 22nd, 23rd and 24th of November—all at Wardha. All the discussions were conducted in the most cordial spirit, every member being anxious to contribute his very best. The committee did not record any evidence, but was extremely grateful to the numerous friends who sent their views on the problems engaging the attention of the committee. The *Report* is a very interesting and instructive document, containing an elaborate exposition of the scheme as outlined in the four resolutions of the Conference, explaining the basic principles underlying the scheme, describing the objects of the new school, outlining the two courses of training for teachers—a complete course of three years and a short course of one year—and indicating the systems of supervision, examinations and administration. In the appendix to the *Report* is given

the detailed plan of a seven years' course of spinning and weaving as the basic craft, together with a list and cost of accessories for the spinning department and for the weaving of cloth, durees and tapes, as well as an approximate estimate of the non-recurring expenditure and of the working capital needed for a school.

Although the public had already come to know of the nature of the new scheme of education from Gandhiji's articles in the *Harijan*, as well as from press reports on the proceedings of the Conference, it was really from this informing and interesting *Report* of the Zakir Husain Committee that the public gained, for the first time, a fuller knowledge of the new scheme of education and of the new type of school, which we may, for convenience sake, call the 'Wardha School'. However, even this first *Report* was either obscure or silent on many points on which the public had expected to receive more light. Consequently, during the few months that followed the publication of the first *Report*, it was freely criticized, all sides pointing out difficulties and raising objections against either the whole scheme or some of its special features. It was clear, however, that these criticisms were based on a misconception of the scheme, due to a want of clearness in the first *Report*.

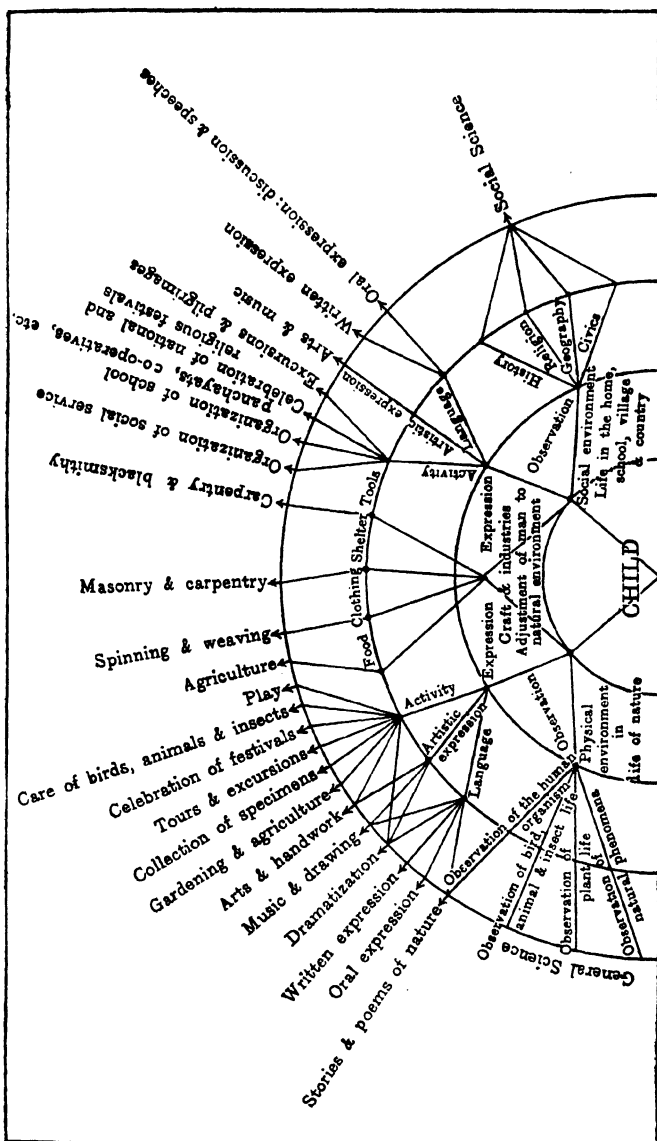
(b) *The Second Report.* This shortcoming was realized by the committee, and its second *Report*, published in April 1938, devotes a fairly large portion of space to answering objections and criticisms. With the publication of the second *Report* containing an elaborate exposition of the syllabuses in different subjects and of the method of correlating these subjects with the basic craft taught, a flood of light was thrown on

the obscure points, with the result that such of the public as were opposing the scheme or raising difficulties and objections merely because they were really groping in the dark, were sincerely converted to the cause of the scheme, and became its enthusiastic admirers.

The second *Report* is specially useful in helping educationists to obtain a clear and definite conception of the new scheme of education as well as of the system of administration proposed and of the procedure to be adopted in introducing schools of the Wardha type. To teachers too the *Report* is helpful as it contains not only elaborate syllabuses for various subjects of study but also a clear exposition of the method of correlating mathematics, social studies, general science, drawing and the mother-tongue with the basic craft of spinning and weaving. It may also be noted that in this second *Report* the Committee has given syllabuses for three basic crafts—agriculture, spinning and weaving, and woodwork and metalwork. An appendix gives an estimate of the floor space required for building a complete school of the Wardha type, with seven classes, having spinning and weaving as the basic craft; and another appendix presents an interesting chart, showing how to co-ordinate children's activities under this new 'child-centred' system of education (see p. 13).

It must have been, indeed, a difficult task even for such an expert committee, imbued, as it was, with Gandhiji's ideas and ideals, to work out such an elaborate syllabus, implementing the rather novel and, at the same time, the *central* idea of this new scheme, namely, intellectual training in and through a basic craft—'from the hand and the senses to the brain and the heart, and from the school to Society and God'.

# CHILD-CENTRED EDUCATION



That the committee was conscious of its difficulties and limitations in presenting to teachers and to the public a perfect and complete syllabus, and that the committee felt that such syllabuses could be fully worked out only as teachers gained experience under the new model, is made evident from the following passage:

A syllabus of this kind, which aims at far-reaching reconstruction of educational practice, really requires a background of fairly extensive experimental work on the lines indicated in our *Report*, because it is only after such practical experience that all the possible correlations can be confidently worked out. While we have done our best in preparing this syllabus and fully utilized our collective experience as teachers, as well as the suggestions received from friends, we must point out that this should be regarded as tentative to show that the principle of co-ordinated teaching, advocated in the *Report*, can be worked out in practice and translated into the terms of the curriculum. But we hope that as teachers in our training schools and colleges and in the new schools of basic education begin to work out the scheme scientifically and record their observations and experiences, it will be possible to improve the syllabus progressively. Such an experimental attitude of mind on the part of teachers is essential for the success and efficiency of this educational scheme.

The committee deserves our congratulations for its true insight into the task it was entrusted with, and for the faith, hope and good will it has shown in the foregoing passage of its *Report*—faith in the scheme, hope in the new teachers, and good will towards the numerous friends who helped it with syllabuses worked out for different subjects.

## CHAPTER II

### GANDHIJI'S IDEAS ON EDUCATION

BEFORE we proceed to examine the Wardha Scheme of education, in order to arrive at a true conception of it and to grasp its various details and distinguishing features, we must be thoroughly acquainted with its background and foundations. The basic ideas of the Wardha Scheme are the ideas of Gandhiji on education. With the help of his articles in the *Harijan*, we are able to get at his mind, and by quoting his own words as well as the words of those who have understood his mind, I shall attempt to throw light on the many features and details of the scheme in the subsequent chapters. Let us first understand the mind of Gandhiji—his ideas on the various aspects of the educational problem.

#### I. Defects of the Present System

According to him, 'the present primary education is a snare and a delusion' (The *Harijan*, September 18, 1937). In his inaugural address at the Conference, he expressed himself with still greater clearness, when he said: 'I am convinced that the present system of primary education is not only wasteful but positively harmful. Most of the boys are lost to the parents and to the occupation to which they were born. They pick up evil habits, affect urban ways and get a smattering of something which may be anything but education.'

The same view on the present system of education was emphasized and more completely brought out by

Sri Mashruwala, who wrote in the *Harijan* (December 4, 1937):

Under the present system most pupils do not, even at the end of their college career, know what they will do after completing their studies. Young boys and girls, unless their material circumstances are hopelessly adverse, pass on from primary to secondary schools, and from secondary schools to colleges, at an enormous expense, not for the love of cultural and other education which the schools and colleges profess to give, but simply because they do not know what else they should or could do. They go on with their studies merely in order to put off till the last day the difficult question of settling the main career of life. More than twenty years of the growing period of life, spent in such aimless manner, must inculcate in the pupils habits of procrastination, hesitation, irresoluteness and inability to take decisions in the pursuits of life.

And Hon. Sri Viswanath Das, Minister for Education, Orissa, forcibly brought out some other evils too, when he said at the Conference:

Education is not worth its name unless it is national and useful. The present system of education that is imparted in our schools is neither the one nor the other. It is a system of instruction which kills the creative genius of the boy and the man, both at school and at college. The ideal of education is to bring out the best in man, to create a love for God and for man. Judged by these standards, education imparted in this country falls far short of its ideal.

These are some of the evils of the present system of education which the new scheme proposes to eradicate.

## II. True Education

Now, what is the idea of true education according to Gandhiji? We have it in his own words. He says: 'By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man—body, mind and spirit. Literacy is not the end of education nor even the beginning. It is only one of the means whereby man and woman can be educated. Literacy in itself is no education.' (The *Harijan*, July 31, 1937.)

This conception of education is amplified in a later article, under the caption: 'Four Things Necessary' (The *Harijan*, October 11, 1937):

The modulation of voice is as necessary as the training of the hand. Physical drill, handicrafts, drawing and music should go hand in hand in order to draw the best out of the boys and girls and create in them a real interest in their tuition.

That this means a revolution in the system of training is admitted. If the future citizens of the State are to build a sure foundation for life's work, these four things are necessary. One has only to visit any primary school to have a striking demonstration of slovenliness, disorderliness and discordant speech. I have no doubt, therefore, that, when the Education Ministers in the several provinces recast the system of education and make it answer the requirements of the country, they will not omit the essentials to which I have drawn attention. My plan of Primary Education certainly comprises these things which easily become possible the moment you remove from the children's shoulders the burden of having to master a difficult foreign language.

The statement 'literacy in itself is no education', made by Gandhiji, may not be clear to all. We shall,

therefore, reproduce another passage from the long and enlightening article of Sri Mashruwala, from which another extract was made earlier (The *Harijan*, December 4, 1937):

In the Segaoon Method,<sup>1</sup> literacy (that is, information on various matters through reading and writing, and capacity to follow logical or pseudo-logical controversy) is not considered knowledge or even the medium of knowledge, but is regarded only as a symbolical representation both of knowledge and of accomplished ignorance. The knowledge of these symbols is necessary and useful, if the sources of knowledge are alive. It will be the aim of the Segaoon Method to keep these sources alive. The means of doing so are work, observation, experience, experiment, service and love. Without these, learning through books acts as a hindrance to the development of the spiritual and rational faculties of the student, and also impairs his physique.

### III. Two Propositions

With the ideas enunciated above as background, Mahatmaji formulated two propositions upon which he built the whole of his Wardha Scheme of education.

1. Primary education, extending over a period of seven years or longer, and covering all the subjects up to the matriculation standard except English, plus a vocation used as a vehicle for drawing out the minds of the boys and girls in all departments of knowledge,

<sup>1</sup> The expression 'Segaoon Method' is another way of referring to the Wardha Scheme:—*Segaoon*, because that is the name of the village where Mahatma Gandhi now lives and where he planned the scheme; and *Wardha*, because the Conference which approved his scheme met in the town of Wardha (in the Central Provinces). The village of Segaoon is five miles from Wardha.

should take the place of what passes today under the name of Primary, Middle, and High School education.

2. Such education, taken as a whole, can, and must be self-supporting; in fact, self-support is the acid test of its reality. (The *Harijan*, October 2, 1937.)

These two propositions he recommended to the careful consideration of the educationists of the country in the following appealing terms:

Having spoken strongly in 1920 against the present system of education, and having now got the opportunity of influencing, however little it may be, Ministers in seven provinces, who have been fellow-workers and fellow-sufferers in the glorious struggle for the freedom of the country, I have felt an irresistible call to make good the charge that the present mode of education is radically wrong from bottom to top. And what I have been struggling to express in these columns very inadequately has come upon me like a flash, and the truth of it is daily growing upon me. I do, therefore, venture to ask the educationists of the country, who have no axes to grind, and who have an open mind, to study the two propositions that I have laid down, without allowing their preconceived and settled notions about the existing mode of education to interfere with the free flow of their reason. I would urge them not to allow my utter ignorance of education in its technical and orthodox sense, to prejudice them against what I have been saying and writing. . . . I therefore ask for an examination of my propositions purely on merits. (The *Harijan*, October 2, 1937.)

#### IV. His Convictions

That the scheme, though novel, is bound to succeed is the conviction of Gandhiji, who has had some

personal experience in the matter. That he recommended it to the consideration of the educationists of the country out of a firm conviction of its success, arising out of his own experience, is evident from the two passages given below:

1. I admit that my proposal is novel. But novelty is no crime. I admit that it has not much experience behind it. But what experience my associates and I have encourages me to think that the plan, if worked faithfully, will succeed. . . . In no other way can Primary Education be made free, compulsory and effective.

2. I can speak from experience. I had no difficulty in giving at Tolstoy Farm (Transvaal) all-round development to the boys and girls for whose training I was directly responsible. The central fact there was vocational training for nearly eight hours. They had one or, at the most, two hours of book learning. The vocations were digging, cooking, scavenging, sandal-making, simple carpentry and messenger work. The age of the children ranged from six to sixteen.

It is interesting to know that, at Tolstoy Farm in South Africa, he trained his own sons and other children through some manual training, e.g., carpentry or shoe-making. This, he says, he 'learned from Kallenbach who had his training in a Trappist Monastery'.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A Trappist Monastery is the residence of Trappist monks of the Catholic Church. They are so called after the Abbey of La Trappe in France, where the Abbot de Rancé introduced, in the seventeenth century, certain reforms in the earlier Religious Order of the Cistercians (called after Cîteaux in France and founded by St Robert in 1098), which itself developed out of the still earlier Order of Benedictines founded in Monte Cassino in Italy by St Benedict in the sixth century. What is noteworthy in the life of these monks (Benedictines, Cistercians and Trappists) is the importance attached to the dignity of manual labour. In the 'Rule

In the foregoing we have, in Gandhiji's own words, his ideas on education, the plan of the new education he recommends, and his conviction that the scheme will succeed 'if worked faithfully'. In fact, as Sri Mahadev Desai said at the Conference: 'The one necessity is faith in the ideology and determination to face the task and stamp out the existing evil.' Unlike those of little faith, Gandhiji says: 'I have no such fears (of failure), because I combine in myself the visionary and the practical man.'

## APPENDIX

### *Mahatma Gandhi's Inaugural Address at the Wardha Conference*

Brothers and Sisters,

I am thankful to you for the trouble you have taken in attending this Conference. You know that I have been asked to preside over this Conference; but it

of St Benedict' (the code regulating the life of the monks), chapter xlviii 'emphasizes the importance of manual labour and arranges the time to be devoted to it daily. This varies according to the season, but is apparently to be never less than about five hours a day' (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. II, p. 438). So too with the Trappists whose day of twenty-four hours was divided thus: seven hours sleep; about seven hours also were devoted to the Divine Office and Mass (common prayers and worship), an hour for meals, four hours for study and private prayers, and *five hours for manual labour*; in winter there were only about four hours devoted to manual labour, the extra hour thus deducted being given to study. The monks were obliged to live by the labour of their hands, so the task appointed for manual labour was seriously undertaken, and was of such a nature as to *render them self-supporting*; such as cultivation of the land, cattle-raising, etc. (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XV, pp. 24 and 25). Thus in Trappist monasteries, emphasis was laid on daily manual labour, and thereby the monks were self-supporting. In the schools under the Trappist monasteries, therefore, children were taught by the monks the dignity of human labour, and handicrafts formed an integral part of education and school life. Many, like Kallenbach, must have profited by this system of practical education under Trappist monks.

does not imply that I have to carry on the whole work singly. I have had very little responsibility in organizing this Conference. Sjt Shrimannarayanji who is the Organizing Secretary of the Marwari Education Society has taken great pains in convening it. It was he who first suggested to me the idea of convening a small Conference to discuss my educational scheme on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the Educational Society. I liked the idea and so here I am to place before you frankly all my ideas on national education which I have been adumbrating through the columns of the *Harijan*. I am open to free and frank criticism so that I might clarify some misunderstandings in connexion with my scheme. The proceedings of the Conference will be mainly in Hindustani; and I think it is quite natural, although it might be slightly inconvenient to some of you to follow the proceedings in detail.

The ideas that I wish to place before you today are new in their method of presentation at least to me, although my experience behind those ideas is very old. The proposition that I wish to put forward refers to both primary and college education. But we will have to give special consideration to primary education. I have included secondary in primary education because primary education is the only education so-called that is available to a very small fraction of the people in our villages—many of which I have seen during my peregrinations since 1915. I have seen, perhaps more than anybody else the conditions of Indian villages. I gained good experience of the rural life of South Africa as well. I know fully well the type of education that is given in Indian villages. And now that I have settled down in Segaoon I can study the whole problem of national education from closer quarters. I am convinced that if we wish to ameliorate rural conditions we must

combine secondary with primary education. The educational scheme therefore, that we wish to place before the country must be primarily for the villages. I have no experience of college education, though I have come in contact with hundreds of college boys, have had heart to heart chats and correspondence with them, know their needs, failings and the diseases they suffer from. But we must restrict ourselves to a consideration of primary education. For the moment the primary question is solved the secondary one of college education will be solved easily.

I am convinced that the present system of primary education is not only wasteful but positively harmful. Most of the boys are lost to the parents and to the occupation to which they are born. They pick up evil habits, affect urban ways and get a smattering of something which may be anything but education. What then should be the form of primary education? I think the remedy lies in educating them by means of vocational or manual training. I have some experience of it myself, having trained my own sons and other children on Tolstoy Farm in South Africa through some manual training, e.g. carpentry or shoe-making which I learned from Kallenbach who had his training in a Trappist Monastery. My sons and all the children, I am confident, have lost nothing, though I could not give them an education that either satisfied him or them, as the time at his disposal was limited and his preoccupations were numerous.

But the scheme that I wish to place before you today is not the teaching of some handicrafts side by side with so-called liberal education. I want that the whole education should be imparted through some handicraft or industry. It might be objected that in the middle ages only handicrafts were taught to the students; but the occupational training, then, was far from serving an educational purpose. The crafts

were taught only for the sake of the crafts, without any attempt to develop the intellect as well. In this age those born to certain professions had forgotten them, had taken to clerical careers and were lost to the countryside. As a result, it is now impossible to find an efficient carpenter or smith in an average village. The handicrafts were nearly lost and the spinning wheel, being neglected, was taken to Lancashire where it was developed, thanks to the English genius, to an extent that is seen today. This, I say, irrespective of my views on industrialism.

The remedy lies in imparting the whole art and science of a craft through practical training and there through imparting the whole education. Teaching of takli-spinning, for instance, presupposes imparting knowledge of various varieties of cotton, different soils in different provinces of India, the history of the ruin of the handicraft, its political reasons which will include the history of British rule in India, a knowledge of arithmetic and so on. I am trying the same experiment on my little grandson who scarcely feels that he is being taught, for all the while he plays and laughs and sings. I am especially mentioning the takli and emphasizing its utility, because I have realized its power and its romance; also because the handicraft of making cloth is the only one which can be taught throughout the country, and because the takli is very cheap. If you have any other suitable handicraft to suggest, please do so without any hesitation so that we might consider it as well. But I am convinced that the takli is the only practical solution of our problem, considering the deplorable economic conditions prevailing in the country. The constructive programme of khadi since 1920 has led to the formation of Congress Ministries in seven provinces, and their success also depends on the extent to which we carry it out.

I have placed the scheme before the Ministers; it is for them to accept it or to reject it. But my advice is that primary education should centre round the takli. During the first year everything should be taught through the takli: in the second year other processes also can be taught side by side. It will also be possible to earn quite enough through the takli because there will be sufficient demand for the cloth produced by the children. Even the parents of the children will be sufficient to consume the products of their children. I have contemplated a seven years' course which so far as the takli is concerned would culminate in practical knowledge of weaving, including dyeing, designing, etc.

You should bear in mind that this primary education would include the elementary principles of sanitation, hygiene, nutrition, of doing their own work, helping parents at home, etc. The present generation of boys knows no cleanliness, no self-help, and is physically weak. I would therefore give compulsory physical training through musical drill.

I have been accused of being opposed to literary training. Far from it! I simply want to show the way in which it should be given. The self-supporting aspect has also been attacked. It is said, whereas we should be expending millions on primary education we are going to exploit the children. It is also feared that there would be enormous waste. This fear is also falsified by experience. As for exploiting or burdening the children, I would ask whether it was burdening the child to save him from a disaster? Takli is a good enough toy to play with. It is no less a toy because it is a productive one. Even today children help their parents to a certain extent. The Segaon children know the details of agriculture better than I, from having worked with their parents on the fields. Whilst the child will be encouraged to

spin and help his parents with agricultural jobs, he will also be made to feel that he does not belong only to his parents but also to the village and to the country, and that he must make some return to them. That is the only way. I would tell the Ministers that they will make children helpless by doling out education to them. They will make them self-confident and brave by making them pay for their own education with their own labour. This system is to be common to all—Hindus, Muslims, Parsees and Christians. Why do I not lay any stress on religious instruction? people ask. Because I am teaching them practical religion, the religion of self-help.

The State is bound to find employment if needed, for all the pupils thus trained. As for teachers, Prof Shah has suggested the method of conscription. He has demonstrated its value by citing instances from Italy and other lands.

I therefore ask you to say whether this imparting of education through manual training appeals to you. For me, to make it self-supporting will be a test of its efficiency. The children ought at the end of seven years to be able to pay for their instruction and be earning units.

College education is largely an urban proposition. I will not say that it is an unmitigated failure, as primary education is, but the results are fairly disappointing. Why should any one of the graduates have to be unemployed?

Takli I proposed as a concrete instance because Vinoba has the largest amount of practical experience in it, and he is here to answer our objections, if any. Kakasaheb will also be able to tell you something, though his experience has been more theoretical than practical. He has especially drawn my attention to Armstrong's *Education for Life*, and particularly the chapter on 'Education of the Hand'. The late

Madhusudan Das was a lawyer, but he was convinced that without the use of our hands and feet our brain would atrophy, and even if it worked it would be the home of Satan. Tolstoy taught the same lesson through many of his tales.

We have communal quarrels—not that they are peculiar to us. England also had its Wars of the Roses, and today British Imperialism is the enemy of the world. If we want to eliminate communal strife, and international strife, we must start with foundations pure and strong by rearing our younger generation on the education I have adumbrated. That plan springs out of non-violence. I suggested it in connexion with the nation's resolve to effect complete prohibition, but I may tell you that even if there was to be no loss of revenue, and our exchequer was full, this education would be a *sine qua non* if we did not want to urbanize our boys. We have to make them true representatives of our culture, our civilization, of the true genius of our nation. We cannot do so otherwise than by giving them a course of self-supporting primary education. Europe is no example for us. It plans its programmes in terms of violence because it believes in violence. I would be the last to minimize the achievement of Russia, but the whole structure is based on force and violence. If India has resolved to eschew violence, this system of education becomes an integral part of the discipline she has to go through. We are told that England spends millions on education, America also does so, but we forget that all that wealth is obtained through exploitation. They have reduced the art of exploitation to a science, and might well give their boys the costly education they do. We cannot, will not, think in terms of exploitation, and we have no alternative but this plan of education which is based on non-violence.

## CHAPTER III

# FUNDAMENTAL FEATURES OF THE SCHEME

THE Wardha Scheme of education as it ultimately emerged from the Conference has several features, some of a fundamental nature and some others of a secondary or of a consequential nature. In this chapter we shall examine the five fundamental features, four of which, embodied in the four resolutions of the Conference are: (1) free and compulsory education for seven years; (2) mother-tongue to be the medium of instruction; (3) process of education to centre round some form of manual *and* productive work in the shape of a craft; and (4) self-supporting to the extent of covering teachers' pay. Rearranging them in the order of their importance as fundamentals of the scheme, the first place ought to be given to the craft-centred process of education, the second to the self-supporting nature of the scheme, the third to the seven-year free *and* compulsory education, and the fourth to the medium of instruction. The doctrine of non-violence is the fifth fundamental feature of the scheme. We will examine them in this order.

### I. Manual and Productive Craft

We must first understand the great revolutionary change in the system of education implied in the introduction of a handicraft. This principle of intellectual

training in and through a craft is the most fundamental feature of the scheme. It is based on the following proposition of Kropotkin:

In the interests of both science and industry, as well as of society as a whole, every human being, without distinction of birth, ought to receive such an education as will enable him or her to combine a thorough knowledge of science with a thorough knowledge of handicraft.

(a) *Its Meaning.* Let us try to understand the meaning of this novel method of education from the very words of Mahatmaji. I am selecting a few passages from his writings, each succeeding passage making the idea clearer and clearer. He says:

1. Every handicraft has to be taught not merely mechanically as is done today, but scientifically, i.e., the child should know the why and the wherefore of every process. (The *Harijan*, July 7, 1937.)

2. The core of my suggestion is that handicrafts are to be taught, not merely for productive work, but for developing the intellect of the pupils. (The *Harijan*, September 11, 1937.)

3. A vocation or vocations are the best medium for the all-round development of a boy or a girl, and therefore all syllabuses should be woven round vocational training.

4. The vocational exercise will keep the mind of the student fresh and alert while providing at the same time a means for drawing out his or her intellect. (The *Harijan*, October 9, 1937.)

5. My point is not that the start should be made with crafts, and the rest should come in as auxiliaries. On the contrary, I have said that the *whole* of the general education should come through the crafts and simultaneously with their progress.

6. The scheme that I wish to place before you today is not the teaching of some handicraft side by side with so-called liberal education. I want that the whole education should be imparted through some handicraft or industry. (Speech at the Conference.)

7. The remedy lies in imparting the whole art and science of a craft through practical training and there-through imparting the whole education. (Speech at the Conference.)

The method of education contemplated in the foregoing statements is more clearly explained in the two following passages :

1. You have to train the boys in one occupation or another. Round this special occupation you will train up his mind, his body, his handwriting, his artistic sense, and so on. (The *Harijan*, September 18, 1937.)

2. I do not want to teach the village children only handicrafts. I want to teach through handwork all the subjects like history, geography, arithmetic, science, language, painting and music. (Speech at the Conference.)

This method is what is referred to as 'correlation with the basic craft'—and this is the *novelty* of the new scheme, which makes it entirely different from the present system of education.

(b) *A Misconception.* Some people think—and I have heard several persons saying it—that in some schools they already have this method of teaching; and that in the revised syllabus of instruction prepared for schools under the Education Department of the Madras Government, we already have the Wardha system. This way of thinking only betrays that the Gandhian method of intellectual training *in and through* a handicraft

has not been grasped by them. They confuse it with the manual training now in vogue. To make matters clear to such people, I shall refer them to two other passages wherein Mahatmaji brings out clearly the distinction between our present-day manual training and the place of manual work in the Wardha school.

1. Explaining his method of education to the Hon Sri Ravishankar Shukla, Education Minister, C.P., who paid a visit to Mahatmaji, along with the Director of Public Instruction and other educational officers of C.P., he said:

Manual work will have to be the centre of the whole thing. I am told that Messrs Abbot and Wood recognize the value of manual work as an important part of rural education. I am glad to be supported by reputed educationists. But I do not suppose they place on manual work the kind of emphasis I place. For, I say that the development of the mind should come through manual training. The manual training will not consist in producing articles for a school museum or toys which have no value. It should produce marketable articles. (The *Harijan*, September 11, 1937.)

2. The distinction is still more clearly brought out in a letter which Mahatmaji wrote to one who had, for a certain number of years, combined manual with literary training in his school, and who was, therefore, under the impression that he had already a Wardha school under him. To him Gandhiji wrote:

I am afraid you have not sufficiently grasped the principle that spinning, carding, etc. should be the means of intellectual training. What is being done there is that it is a *supplementary course to the intellectual course*. I want you to appreciate the difference

between the two. A carpenter teaches me carpentry. I shall learn it mechanically from him, and as a result I shall know the use of various tools, but that will hardly develop my intellect. But, if the same thing is taught to me by one who has taken a scientific training in carpentry, he will stimulate my intellect too. Not only shall I then have become an expert carpenter but also an engineer. For, the expert will have taught me mathematics, also told me the difference between various kinds of timber, the place where they came from, giving me thus a knowledge of geography and also a little knowledge of agriculture. He will also have taught me to draw models of my tools, and given me a knowledge of elementary geometry and arithmetic. It is likely that you do not correlate manual work with intellectual training which is given exclusively through reading and writing.

From the foregoing passages it is clear that, by merely adding to the curriculum of present schools one other subject—weaving or carpentry—while all other subjects are still taught in the traditional way, we shall not be transforming the present schools into Wardha schools. If a school is to become a Wardha school, the present method of instruction has to undergo a revolution as explained by Gandhiji and as outlined in the Zakir Husain syllabus, (a) by introducing *productive* manual work, (b) by stimulating intellect through a craft and (c) by correlating various subjects with the basic craft.

(c) *Its Feasibility.* Dr Zakir Husain observed at the Conference:

Those who are working in the educational field will not find Mahatmaji's scheme very new. They know that true learning can be imparted only through doing. They also know that children have to be taught various

subjects through manual work. It is known to us teachers, that up to the age of 13 children want to do and undo, break and mend things. This is how nature educates them. Asking them to sit with books in one place is to do violence to them. Many educationists have, therefore, been trying to make some manual work the centre of education. This method is called the Project Method in America and the Complex Method in Russia.<sup>1</sup>

From this note of confidence struck by so eminent an educationist, with personal knowledge of foreign educational systems, as Dr Zakir Husain, one must look upon this plan of education as certainly feasible. In other countries they have already introduced it and are working it successfully. Let me say that in our own country there are institutions, here and there, where this plan of education is being carried out. In fact, I have seen with my own eyes how this Project Method is successfully and enthusiastically followed in the London Mission Training School at Erode. One need not, therefore, entertain any doubt as to the feasibility of this new plan.

## **II. Self-Supporting Education**

The self-supporting nature of this education is another fundamental, only second in importance to the handicraft. Though intellectual training in and through a craft is not much objected to, there is a great deal of opposition to, and misunderstanding of, the self-supporting character of Wardha education. For this

<sup>1</sup> However, there is a great difference between the Project Method and the Wardha Method as will be pointed out in Chapter X, Section 1.

reason, it is necessary that we should dwell on it at greater length.

(a) *Its Twofold Meaning.* Let me, at the very outset, make it clear that the term 'self-supporting' is used, in connexion with the Wardha Scheme, in two entirely different senses—education that will help one to be self-supporting in later life, and education which in itself is self-supporting.

(i) I shall first dispose of that which is obvious and easy to understand and which is not objected to in any way, namely, enabling the boy or girl to be self-supporting after leaving the school by finding an occupation—unlike the product of the present system of aimless education. In other words, the handicraft feature of the new education is a solution to the problem of unemployment, by training pupils to earn their bread and thus enabling them to be self-supporting after they finish their school course.

Let me confirm this view with two passages. Gandhiji says:

The intellect of our boys is being wasted. Our boys do not know what to do on leaving school. True education is that which draws out and stimulates the spiritual, intellectual and physical faculties of the children. This (Wardha school) education ought to be for them a kind of *insurance against unemployment*. (The *Harijan*, September 11, 1937.)

Again elaborating this idea, he said to some one:

The child at the age of 14, that is after finishing a seven years' course, should be discharged as an earning unit. Even now the poor people's children automatically lend a helping hand to their parents—the feeling at the back of their minds being: what

shall my parents eat and what shall they give me to eat, if I do not also work with them? That is an education in itself. Even so the State takes charge of the child at seven and returns it to the family as an earning unit. You impart education and simultaneously cut at the root of unemployment. (The *Harijan*, September 18, 1937.)

(ii) The second or the real meaning of the term 'self-supporting' is the one which is specially intended in connexion with the new scheme, and that is, meeting the expenses of teachers' salaries through the manual and productive work of the children. The various ideas and details underlying this fundamental feature of the scheme, could best be brought out in the words of Gandhiji, the italicized words bringing out the details of his plan.

1. Primary education thus *conceived as a whole* (i.e., 7 years) is bound to be self-supporting, even though *for the first or even the second year's course it may not be wholly so*. (The *Harijan*, September 18, 1937.)

2. What I have claimed is that education through handicrafts should be self-supporting *during the sum total of seven years* I have assigned for it. I have specially said that *during the first two years it may mean a partial loss*.

3. Supposing a student works at a vocation for four hours a day, then taking the number of working days in a month to be 25 and the rate of remuneration two pice per hour, he or she would be earning Rs. 3-2-0 per month for the school. This does not mean that the child would begin to pay two pice per hour from the commencement. But he will pay *during the whole period of seven years* at the rate of two pice per hour. (The *Harijan*, October 9, 1937.)

4. In the course of one of his speeches at the Conference, he said:

I am confident that, if we make *calculations for the seven years together*, we shall find that education can be self-supporting. In the first year, if each boy is able to earn two pice a day, he will be able to earn one anna the next year. In this way, their power of production would go on increasing, and they would be *able to earn their living in later life*.

This last passage is of special interest in studying the meaning of the term 'self-supporting', for we find therein that the term is used in both senses by Gandhiji himself. One idea, however, is not brought out in the foregoing passages, viz., what part of the expenses of the school is to be met by the productive labour of the children. This question is answered in the following statements of Gandhiji:

I am very keen on finding the *expenses of a teacher* through the product of the manual labour of his pupils.

In the third proposition he placed before the Conference, he answers this question in these terms:

. . . to enable the pupil to *pay for his tuition* through the products of his labour. . . . *Land, buildings and equipment are not intended to be covered by the proceeds of the pupils' labour.*

The plan of finding the teachers' pay out of pupils' productive work is worked out in greater detail and made yet clearer by Sri Mushruwala in his article referred to before. He says:

Reckoning on an average three hours<sup>1</sup> of work per day for about nine months in the year, the test of

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji proposes to have four hours a day. Vide p. 35 ante.

the efficiency of a Segson School should be that a full school of not less than seven classes, with on an average 25 pupils per class, and 8 or 9 members on the staff, should be able to earn *the annual salaries of the staff from the products manufactured in the school*. The minimum salary of a teacher is expected to be Rs. 25 per month (in no case should it be less than Rs. 20).

Enough has been said to show what Mahatmaji means by the term 'self-supporting'.

(b) *Raison d'etre of the Idea*. Before proceeding further, we must ask ourselves this question: What is the *raison d'etre* of this idea of self-supporting education? In other words, why is Gandhiji so anxious to introduce this feature, as a fundamental, into his scheme of education? I feel that a correct answer to this question is necessary to silence the critics and to justify this entirely novel feature of his scheme. Here, again, as heretofore, we must get at the core of the great mastermind that has thought out a new system of education for the nation.

It is the poverty of India that has driven Mahatmaji to propose this solution of the educational puzzle. The *raison d'etre* of the self-supporting feature of his educational system is the inability of a poor country like India to find the crores of rupees needed to introduce free and compulsory education for the millions of her children. In the course of his inaugural address at the Conference, he said:

I am very keen on finding the expenses of a teacher through the product of the manual work of his pupils, because I am convinced that there is no other way

to carry education to the crores of our children. We cannot wait until we have the necessary revenue and until the Viceroy reduces the military expenditure.

In the mind of the public there is an impression that the vast educational expansion cannot be met without the revenue from liquor. It is very interesting to know what Gandhiji thinks on this aspect of the problem. He says:

The cruellest irony of the new Reforms lies in the fact that we are left with nothing but the liquor revenue to fall back upon in order to give our children education. That is the educational puzzle, but it should not baffle us. We have to solve it, and the solution must not involve the compromise of our ideal of prohibition, cost whatever else it may. It must be shameful and humiliating to think that unless we got the drink revenue, our children would be starved of their education. (The *Harijan*, August 21, 1937.)

One day discussing this theory of self-supporting education, he sounded a warning against the assumption that the idea of such education sprang from the necessity of achieving total prohibition as soon as possible. To correct this misunderstanding, he said:

Both are independent necessities. You have to start with the conviction that total prohibition has to be achieved, revenue or no revenue, education or no education. Similarly, you have to start with the conviction that, looking to the needs of the villages of India, our rural education ought to be made self-supporting if it is to be compulsory. (The *Harijan*, September 18, 1937.)

In another passage we observe that this conviction of Gandhiji really accounts for the theory of self-supporting education:

How to solve the problem of education is the problem unfortunately mixed up with the disappearance of the drink revenue. No doubt there are ways and means of raising fresh taxation. . . . As a nation we are so backward in education that we cannot hope to fulfil our obligations to the nation in this respect in a given time during this generation, if the programme is to depend on money. *I have, therefore, made bold*, even at the risk of losing all reputation for constructive ability, *to suggest that education should be self-supporting.* (The *Harijan*, July 31, 1937.)

That Mahatmaji is thoroughly convinced of the necessity and feasibility of self-supporting education is made evident by a strongly worded passage in his article on 'Self-supporting Education' in the *Harijan* of September 11, 1937:

Surely, if the State takes charge of the children between seven and fourteen, and trains their bodies and minds through productive labour, the public schools must be frauds and teachers idiots, if they cannot become self-supporting.

(c) *Feasibility of the Idea.* Though people are convinced by the foregoing argument of Mahatmaji in support of the self-supporting idea, they have expressed doubt as to its feasibility. That he is fully convinced of the feasibility of the idea in the sense explained above, is obvious from some of the passages quoted from his writings. We must nevertheless go a step further and try to convince the doubting Thomases.

Here is the opinion of one who has examined this problem, along with the question of school hours. Dr A. Lakshmipathi of Madras says:

I have seen some institutions conducted by missionaries, where the schools are worked only in the mornings, the evenings being spent either in agricultural operations or in some handicraft work, for which the students are paid some wages according to the quality and quantity of work done by them. *In this way, the institution is made more or less self-supporting*, and the students do not feel like fish out of water when they leave the school, as they have learnt to do some work *enabling them to earn at least their livelihood*. I have noticed that the atmosphere in which such schools are conducted is quite different from the dull routine of the stereotyped schools of the Education Department. The boys look more healthy and happy in the idea that they have turned out some useful work and are physically of a better build.

In this passage Dr Lakshmipathi has pointed out that education could be made *self-supporting in both the senses* explained above. I should like to confirm his opinion by my own personal observation in some of the schools I have visited during the past few months. What I saw with my own eyes, particularly in two missionary institutions, has convinced me that, with faith and enthusiasm and with a careful organization of the school work, education could be made self-supporting. Witness the Pasumalai Training and High School in the Madura District, conducted by the American Mission, as also the Higher Elementary School at Dornakal (in the Nizam's Dominions) conducted by the Rt Rev Dr Azariah, Bishop of Dornakal. I have

gathered evidence to corroborate what Dr Lakshmipathi has stated. Indeed, we can make education self-supporting by the labour of the students and can enable them to be self-supporting after they leave school.

### III. Seven Years Compulsory Education

The third fundamental feature of the Wardha Scheme is the seven years course of free and compulsory education. The resolution embodying this feature reads thus: 'That in the opinion of this Conference free and compulsory education be provided for seven years on a nation-wide scale.'

(a) *Contrast with the Present System.* We are already familiar with the idea of free and compulsory education which has been introduced, though worked not with enthusiasm, in several municipalities and rural areas in the country. But there are several material differences between the present conception of free and compulsory education and that under the Wardha Scheme.

(i) At present free and compulsory education implies only *five years* of the Primary course consisting of five standards, while the Wardha Scheme wants a course of *seven years*.

(ii) Now the age-limits of children under compulsion are *5 to 10 years*, while under the Wardha Scheme the limits will be *7 to 14 years*.

(iii) Today free and compulsory education is the first or the earliest stage in the education of a child, while, under the Wardha Scheme, it will be the second stage in his education, the first being the pre-Wardha stage

which may be called 'Home Education'. At the Conference, Sri Kakasaheb Kalelkar said:

The universal and compulsory primary<sup>1</sup> education should be given from the 7th to the 14th year. The infant education from the 3rd to the 6th year can be imparted by the parents *at home*.

(We shall examine this view in a later chapter.)

(iv) The fourth point of contrast—a very material point—is that, while at present the five years of free and compulsory education aim at imparting only *elementary* education, the Wardha Scheme proposes to bring in, within the seven years of compulsion, *both elementary and secondary education* (as will be seen from the next chapter).

(v) While by *free* education we mean today an education for which the parents do not pay any fees, under the Wardha Scheme, although the parents will not have to pay any fees and education will be free in that sense, it will not be free from the children's point of view, for they will have to pay for their tuition by their productive manual labour, other expenses, recurring and non-recurring, being met by the State, as at present, out of the taxes paid by the parents.

Thus there is a considerable difference between the nature and scope of compulsory education as envisaged under the present regulations and that under the Wardha Scheme. Out of these differences arise various questions which ought to be examined carefully before this feature of the scheme is accepted *in toto*:—(1) Will the purpose of the Wardha system be served adequately by having education only for seven years? (2) Why have

<sup>1</sup> It is more than 'primary' as will be pointed out in the next chapter.

the age-limits of 7 to 14 been decided upon by the committee? (3) Can we justify the extension of the compulsory period to 7 years, while even 5 years are found too many by the poor parents?

(b) *Duration of Compulsory Education.* The Conference decided upon seven years of compulsion, and the Committee framed the syllabus accordingly. Justifying this decision, the first *Report* says:

The objectives of education (under the Wardha Scheme) will require that pupils remain at school for seven years. After careful consideration we have come to the conclusion that seven plus will be the proper age to enforce compulsion. Since we accept as a principle that the basic education should as far as possible be the same for all, we recommend that it should be free and compulsory for all girls and boys between the ages of seven and fourteen. As a concession, however, girls may be withdrawn after the completion of their twelfth year if the guardians so wish it.

That seven years may not be quite adequate to attain the objects underlying the Wardha Scheme seems to be the view of Gandhiji. In his two propositions mentioned above (p. 18) he says:

Primary<sup>1</sup> education, extending over a period of seven years or longer . . . .

In the *Harijan* of September 18, 1937, he wrote:

Seven years are not an integral part of my plan. It may be that more time will be required to reach

<sup>1</sup> The term 'primary' is used by Gandhiji in a special sense. It includes elementary or primary education as we understand it now, as well as the secondary education in our high school classes, as will be explained in the next chapter.

the intellectual level aimed at by me. The nation won't lose anything whatsoever by a prolongation of the period of instruction.

Again, in one of his speeches at the Conference, he said :

I am not very particular about the duration; it may be 7 years or 9 years.

Sri Mashruwala too thinks so. In his article often referred to before, he says :

The Basic Course should extend to not less than seven years, and may be a little more if necessary.

And the Committee too is inclined to this view. In the second *Report* we read :

We are so strongly convinced of the educative importance of the years of adolescence that, if we could extend the period of education, we should like to keep the students at school till the age of sixteen in order to ensure proper moral, social and civic training.

However, the State will be advancing the cause of compulsory education if children can be kept at school till their fourteenth year.

(c) *Age-limits for Compulsion.* As regards the age-limits of 7 to 14, let it be understood that Gandhiji only insisted on the period of compulsion being seven years or more, without suggesting any age-limits. It is the members of the committee who have fixed the age-limits of 7 to 14. Let us hear from them the reasons for their decision :

We have chosen the 7-14 age range, because we consider it absolutely essential to keep the child at

school until he is fourteen, in order to ensure that he will receive the essential modicum of social and civic training which—for psychological reasons—is not possible earlier—in order to become a better citizen, that his literary training will be thorough enough to make a lapse into illiteracy impossible, and that he will acquire sufficient skill in his basic craft to practise it successfully if he adopts it as his vocation.

A question then naturally arises: If children could be compelled to attend school up to the age of fourteen, why not compel them to begin compulsory education earlier than the age of seven, say, from their fifth or sixth year? We shall examine this question in connexion with the criticism that the committee has lightly passed over the question of pre-Wardha school education, in the chapter on ' Criticisms '.

(d) *Justification for Seven Years Compulsion.* A far more important question—both from the educational and from the economic point of view—is whether there is sufficient justification for the State to compel a child to attend school for seven years, when parents feel it too much at present to keep their children at school even for five years. Indeed, the State can, in the interests of the country; but are there not other grounds to justify seven years compulsion under the Wardha system of education?

From the educational point of view, no one will find seven years education too long to achieve the objects kept in view by the inspirer of the scheme as well as by the members of the conference and of the committee. If the Wardha school education covers ' all the subjects up to the matriculation standard, except

English, plus a vocation', that is, our present primary, middle and high school education, seven years will not be found too long a period for this education.

Also from the economic or parents' point of view, seven years compulsion could be justified. As Sri *Mashruwala* says:

If the schools become self-supporting, and if the guardians also get something out of it, the maintenance of boys for a longer period will present no obstacle to the parents.

Sri Kakasaheb Kalelkar said at the Conference:

There has been a good deal of controversy about the duration of primary education, i.e., four years or seven years. I think that, when education becomes self-supporting, the public will not mind keeping the children for some years more in the schools.

Evidently, if parents have not to pay school fees for their children and if their children can be made 'earning units' of the family at the end of their seven years of Wardha education, there may not be any perceptible opposition to the seven years compulsory education, provided measures are taken to enlighten the public on the benefits of this system of education to the child as well as to the parent. Indeed, during the period of compulsion, boys cannot help their parents to increase the family earnings; but in view of later benefits to the family, as well as to the individual, there is ample justification for seven years compulsion.

#### IV. Emphasis on Indian Languages

(a) *Mother-Tongue.* The fourth fundamental feature of the Wardha Scheme is the emphasis laid on one's

mother-tongue in the scheme of teaching and studies. The resolution on this feature says that the medium of instruction be the mother-tongue. Much more importance is deservedly given to the mother-tongue in the syllabus by the committee. It is not only to become the medium of instruction, but it is to occupy the first place among languages—a place hitherto occupied by English. Today English is the first language, the mother-tongue or the language of the district<sup>1</sup> is the second language, and anything else may come in as the third and the fourth. But under the Wardha system, the mother-tongue will take the place of English as the first language and as medium of instruction, and Hindustani will be given the place of second language, English being thus banned from the Wardha School. The position may be summed up in the words of Sri Mushruwala:

. . . A good knowledge of the mother-tongue, a fair acquaintance with its literature, a working knowledge of the national language of India . . . .

That the medium of instruction should be the mother-tongue, and not English, is almost beyond controversy. So too the position of mother-tongue as the first language of study is also admitted on all hands. But there is some reasonable difference of opinion as to the place that should be assigned to English in the Wardha school. As a language of culture and of international communication, some place may have to be given to English even in a system of national education; but that is a

<sup>1</sup> In the case of pupils whose mother-tongue is one which has no alphabet or literature, like Konkani and Tulu, the language of the district will take the place of the mother-tongue in the scheme of education.

matter which may be left to the Provincial Governments who will adapt the Wardha Scheme to the circumstances of the Province. We shall discuss this point in the chapter on ' Criticisms '.

Emphasizing this feature of the scheme, the Committee says in the first *Report*:

The proper teaching of the mother-tongue is the foundation of all education. Without the capacity to speak effectively and to read and write correctly and lucidly, no one can develop precision of thought or clarity of ideas. Moreover, it is a means of introducing the child to the rich heritage of his people's ideas, emotions, and aspirations, and can therefore be made a valuable means of social education, whilst also instilling right ethical and moral values. Also, it is a natural outlet for the expression of the child's aesthetic sense and appreciation, and if the proper approach is adopted, the study of literature becomes a source of joy and creative appreciation.

And in the syllabus on mother-tongue the committee has done well in having stressed ' both the creative and the utilitarian values of language and literature ', and the teacher is expected ' to organize his oral work as well as his reading material round the actual but growing life and interests of his children '. Thus the language syllabus too is child-centred.

(b) *Hindustani*. By the side of the mother-tongue the Wardha Scheme has assigned to Hindustani a reasonable and justifiable position among the subjects of study as a *compulsory second language*. Justifying this position, the Committee says in the first *Report*:

The object of including Hindustani as a compulsory subject in the school curriculum is to ensure that all

the children educated in these national schools may have a reasonable acquaintance with a common *lingua franca*. As adult citizens they should be able to co-operate with their fellow-countrymen belonging to any part of the country. In teaching the language the teacher should in various ways quicken in the students the realization that this language is the most important product of the cultural contact of the Hindus and Muslims in India. It is the repository—in its more advanced forms—of their best thoughts and aspirations. They should learn to take pride in its richness and vitality and should feel the desire to serve it devotedly.

It is worth noting that in the Hindustani-speaking areas this language will naturally be the mother-tongue, but in other areas it is proposed to impart only a working knowledge of this language, just enough to serve the purpose for which it is introduced as a second language. This fact is corroborated by the provision made in the syllabus of Grade VII which is the highest class in the Wardha school. What this syllabus attempts is to enable the student:

1. to be able to make a short speech and to engage in conversation;
2. to write simple and business letters; and
3. to read simple books, periodicals and newspapers.

One more fact worth emphasizing is that, in non-Hindustani-speaking areas, where the provincial or district language will be the mother-tongue and, therefore, the first language of study and also the medium of instruction, 'the study of Hindustani will be compulsory during the fifth and sixth years of school life', but the children will have the choice of learning either one or

other of the scripts (Arabic or Nagari), teachers having to know both scripts.

If such is the restricted scope of studying Hindustani in non-Hindustani-speaking areas, one need not apprehend any rivalry between Hindustani and the mother-tongue, and therefore Hindustani will never endanger, much less kill, languages like Tamil, Telugu, Kannada or Malayalam, in spite of the contention of the lovers of these languages to the contrary.

## **V. The Cult of Non-Violence**

There is one more fundamental feature which must be specially emphasized, viz., the cult of non-violence or *ahimsa*, the embodiment and teacher of which in India is Mahatma Gandhi. His plan of education is impregnated with his cardinal creed of non-violence. As Sri Mushruwala puts it, the Segson Method is 'the application of the law of non-violence in the training of the child as a prospective citizen of the world'. This creed of non-violence is so much an integral part of the Wardha Scheme that Sri Mahadev Desai said at the Conference:

The idea of self-supporting education cannot be divorced from the ideological background of non-violence; and unless we bear in mind that the new scheme is intended to bring into being a new age from which class and communal hatred is eliminated, and exploitation is eschewed, we cannot make a success of it. We should, therefore, approach the task with faith in non-violence and in the faith that the new scheme is evolved by a mind that has conceived non-violence as the panacea for all evils.

If it is so important a feature of the new scheme, then, we must get at the mind of the author of non-violence. In concluding his inaugural address at the Conference, Mahatmaji drew the attention of the audience to the very fundamentals of his plan of self-supporting primary education and made himself clear in the following passage which may be regarded as the key to his mind and as characteristic of his deep thinking. He said:

We have communal quarrels—not that they are peculiar to us. England had also its Wars of the Roses, and today British Imperialism is the enemy of the world. If we want to eliminate communal strife and international strife, we must start with foundations pure and strong by rearing our younger generation on the education I have adumbrated. That plan springs out of non-violence. We have to make them true representatives of our culture, our civilization, of the true genius of our nation. We cannot do so otherwise than by giving them a course of self-supporting primary education. Europe is no example for us. It plans its programmes in terms of violence because it believes in violence. I would be the last to minimize the achievement of Russia, but the whole structure is based on force and violence. If India has resolved to eschew violence, this system of education becomes an integral part of the discipline she has to go through. We are told that England spends millions on education, America also does so, but we forget that all that wealth is obtained through exploitation. They have reduced the art of exploitation to a science, and might well give their boys the costly education they do. We cannot, will not, think in terms of exploitation, and we have no alternative

but this plan of education which is based on non-violence.

The ideas of exploitation and violence are made a little more clear by another speaker at the Conference. Sri Kakasaheb Kalelkar said:

Today owing to the advent of the Machine Age we are an exploited nation, because we buy machine-made goods. If we also begin machine manufactures we can become an exploiting nation. But until all men and the domestic animals are employed in the country, we have no right to snatch their living with the help of the machine. We should view education from the standpoint of non-violence, because, I think, Education and Violence are fundamentally opposed to each other. To begin with I was a revolutionary and believed in violence and corporal punishment; but I am now convinced that true education must be given through non-violence, and this is the central idea in Gandhiji's educational scheme.

The five fundamental features of the Wardha Scheme explained above will certainly revolutionize education. And as the Hon Sri Vishwanath Das, Minister for Education, Orissa, observed at the Conference,

Such changes are bound to be revolutionary. They are proposed to change not only the system of instruction, but the very notion and conception of education. These changes are proposed to make education in India really useful to men so as to develop the creative genius of youth.

## CHAPTER IV

# SECONDARY FEATURES OF THE SCHEME

IN the last chapter we examined the five fundamental features of the scheme, and in this I shall bring out some other features of a secondary nature. Though of secondary importance relatively, these too are integral parts of the Wardha Scheme.

### I. Matriculation Standard

Though according to Mahatmaji, his scheme is one of 'primary' education, it includes what we now understand by elementary and secondary education. On this point too much ignorance is displayed by some; they think the Wardha schoolboy will attain only the level of a boy who reads up to Standard VIII of a Higher Elementary School in the Madras Province, and would simply laugh at the idea of attaining the matriculation standard in Grade VII of a Wardha School. Let us hear Mahatmaji who has made it clear that the Wardha School aims at the matriculation standard, though with a curriculum of studies different from our present Matriculation or Secondary School Leaving Certificate Examination.

1. In his very first article on his plan of education, in the *Harijan* of July 31, 1937, he hinted at his conception of 'primary' education:

I attach the greatest importance to primary education which, according to my conception,

should be equal to the *present matriculation less English*.

2. In a later article he formulated his two propositions, already referred to, in which he clarified and amplified his plan:

Primary education, extending over a period of seven years or longer, and covering *all the subjects up to the matriculation standard, except English, plus a vocation . . .* should take the place of what passes today under the name of Primary, Middle and High School education. (The *Harijan*, October 2, 1937.)

3. Once somebody put this question to him: 'Then, you would really abolish what is called secondary education and give the whole education up to matriculation in village schools?' To this he replied:

Certainly. What is your secondary education but compelling the poor boys to learn in a foreign language in seven years what they should learn in the course of a couple of years (?) in their own mother-tongue? If you can but make up your minds to free the children from the incubus of learning their subjects in a foreign language, and if you teach them to use their hands and feet profitably, the educational puzzle is solved. (The *Harijan*, August 21, 1937.)

4. He made himself still more clear when he explained the point to Sri Ravishanker Shukla:

I should combine into one what you call now primary education and secondary or high school education. It is my conviction that our children get nothing more in the high schools than a half-baked knowledge of English, besides a superficial knowledge of mathematics and history and geography, some of which they had learnt in their own language in the

primary classes. If you cut out English from the curriculum altogether, without cutting out the subjects you teach, you can make the children go through the whole course in seven years, instead of eleven, besides giving them manual work whereby they can make a fair return to the State.

In his inaugural address at the Conference, he not only explained his plan of combining secondary education with primary education, but also pointed out the reasons why he urges this revolutionary reform in the existing system of education. He said:

I have included secondary in primary education because primary education is the only education so-called that is available to a very small fraction of the people in our villages, many of which I have seen during my peregrinations since 1915. I have seen, perhaps more than anybody else, the conditions of Indian villages. I know fully well the type of education that is given in Indian villages. And now that I have settled down in Segaoon I can study the whole problem of national education from closer quarters. I am convinced that, if we wish to ameliorate rural conditions, we must combine secondary with primary education.

As in the case of some of the other features of the Wardha Scheme, so too on the question of the matriculation standard aimed at by the new scheme, people have shown ignorance which arises out of an imperfect knowledge of the scheme. Indeed, for people who are accustomed to a system of 11 years education, comprising elementary and secondary stages—5 years of elementary and 6 years of secondary—it is really difficult to realize how it is possible to finish off both the stages in a period of seven years. If, however, they will

examine the syllabus carefully, they will be convinced of the feasibility of combining both the elementary and secondary stages of education in 7 years. In fact, it will be found that, barring the knowledge of English in the present matriculation course, a boy who emerges from the Wardha school will have a standard of knowledge and formation which is decidedly higher than that of a modern Matriculate or Secondary School Leaving Certificate holder. (See the chapter on 'The Wardha Syllabus'.)

## II. Different Steps in Education

From the point of view of the different steps in the process of education, the Wardha Scheme is different from the present arrangement, and this is another important feature of the scheme. And Gandhiji claims for his system superiority over the present plan. In three passages we see him explaining this feature, each succeeding passage making his idea clearer:

1. Our present system of education starts off with a study of the alphabet, but the Gandhian way is different. He says:

The signs of the alphabet may be taught later when the pupil has learnt to distinguish wheat from chaff and when he has somewhat developed his tastes. This is a revolutionary proposal, but it saves immense labour and enables a student to acquire in one year what he may take much longer to learn. (*The Harijan*, July 31, 1937.)

2. A high education officer, who sent him an elaborate and considered criticism of his scheme, observed out of ignorance that, in his plan, formal training through the medium of reading and writing in

subjects like history, geography and arithmetic came right at the end, and to this Gandhiji replied:

Nor have I said that the formal training through the medium of reading and writing should come right at the end. On the contrary, the formal training comes in at the very beginning. Indeed, it is an integral part of the general equipment. I have indeed said, and I repeat here, that reading may come a little later, and writing may come last. But the *whole process has to be finished within the first year*; so that at the end of the first year in the school of my imagination a seven-year-old child, boy or girl, will have much more than the general information that any boy or girl has in the present primary school during the first year. He will read correctly and draw correct letters instead of making the daubs that the children generally do at present. The child will also know elementary additions and subtractions and the simple multiplication table.<sup>1</sup>

3. He brings out his idea in still clearer terms in the following passage:

In my scheme of things the hand will handle tools before it draws or traces the writing. The eye will read the pictures of letters and words as they will know other things in life. The ear will catch the names and meanings of things and sentences. The whole training will be natural, responsive, and therefore the quickest and the cheapest in the land. The children of my school will, therefore, read much more quickly than they will write. And when they write, they will not produce daubs as I do even now (thanks to my teachers), but they will trace correct figures of the objects they see. If the schools of my conception

<sup>1</sup> See the chapter on 'Wardha Experiment'; at Wardha we see today the truth of Gandhiji's view.

ever come into being, I make bold to say that they will vie with the most advanced schools in quickness, so far as reading is concerned, and even writing if it is common ground that the writing must be correct and not incorrect as it now is in the vast majority of cases.

### III. State to Buy Products of Children's Labour

Another feature of the scheme is that the State should take over the products of the children. This, again, is so novel a plan that it is not easy to understand. It is so important and integral a part of the scheme that without it the self-supporting character falls to the ground. What, then, is this novel plan? Let us try to grasp the meaning of it with the help of Gandhiji's own words:

1. Every school can be made self-supporting, the condition being that the State takes over the manufactures of these schools. (The *Harijan*, July 31, 1937.)

2. To one who asked him: 'Are the sales to be effected by a central organization?', he answered: 'The State will absorb much of the material for its own requirements.'

These enigmatic statements do not throw much light on his plan. A little more light is thrown on this novel idea in the course of his speech at the Conference, when he said:

When the Ministers create a suitable atmosphere in the country, people will want to buy the school products even by paying a higher price. This is how there will be no difficulty in marketing them. And so far as cloth is concerned, I think the State will have to buy all the necessary cloth from the schools.

even though at a higher price. For example, take the Printing Press in Yerawada Jail.<sup>1</sup> Although its rates are higher than the other local presses, the Government does all its printing there; our work has to be done in the same way.

The committee does not help us with more light on this apparently obscure feature of the scheme. It simply dismisses the point in the first *Report* by saying that 'Mahatmaji has definitely suggested that the State should guarantee to take over, at prices calculated as above, the product of the work done by its future citizens in school, a view which we heartily endorse'. Instead of merely endorsing the view heartily, the committee, which has taken pains to explain other features, could have devoted some attention also to this obscure point, at least in the second *Report*. The second *Report* dismisses this point in a summary way by telling Gandhiji:

We had not specifically mentioned, in our (first) *Report*, the setting up of a sales organization for school products, because we were primarily concerned with the drafting of an educational scheme and not with its political and administrative implications. Moreover, you made it quite clear in your speech at the conference that, in the last instance, the State would be responsible for their purchase at a fair price, and we had made a reference to your remark in the (first) *Report*.

Though, of course, it was not strictly within the terms of reference, the committee could have helped the

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji was for some time in this jail, and therefore had occasion to know the practice prevailing therein.

public to understand the feasibility of this novel plan and dislodged opposition to the scheme on this score, by outlining a plan or organization for the sale of the products of the school by the State. As the successful working out of the self-supporting feature of the scheme depends to a large extent on this plan of the State purchasing, or arranging for the sale of, the children's products, this point should not have been left so vague and obscure. However, the burden is thrown on the Government to introduce a suitable and practical organization for the purpose, and we may trust the Ministers to use their ingenuity to carry out Mahatmaji's plan.

#### **IV. Relationship with Life**

Another interesting and necessary feature of this system of national education is its close relationship with life situations. Among the evils of the present system of education is the lack of co-ordination of the various subjects and the difficulty of adjusting the child intelligently and actively to his environment. In order to avoid this evil the committee has wisely planned the syllabuses basing them on three centres, intrinsically inter-connected, as the foci for the curriculum, i.e. the Physical Environment, the Social Environment and Craftwork. The committee has stressed the principle that all teaching should be carried on through concrete life situations relating to craft or to social and physical environment so that whatever the child learns becomes assimilated into his growing activity. Thus the new type of school will not be a place of passive absorption of information imparted at second-hand, but will be a place of work and experimentation and discovery,

because it will follow an ' activity curriculum '. As the committee remarks :

In the preparation of this syllabus, we have attempted to organize the subject-matter into significant and comprehensive units of experience which will, when mastered, enable the child to understand his environment better and to react to it more intelligently, because they throw helpful light on the problems and conditions of life around him.

Thus with this right approach to the syllabus, the committee avoids the present practice of making it a mere collection of unrelated and miscellaneous facts, having no direct bearing on children's experiences or on social life. This idea of close relationship with life-situations is well illustrated particularly by the syllabuses in Social Studies and General Science.<sup>1</sup> The teaching of these subjects is not only closely co-ordinated, but springs from actual social circumstances—the child's home, his village, its occupations and crafts. In this manner the child acquires his knowledge actively and utilizes it for the understanding and the better control of his social environment. From this arises another important feature of the scheme—the sense of social responsibility.

## **Y. Ideal of Citizenship**

Another important feature of the scheme is the ideal of citizenship inherent in it. The present system of education has completely ignored this aspect of education. In modern India, citizenship is destined to become increasingly democratic in the social, economic and political life of the country. and a system of national

<sup>1</sup> See the chapter on ' The Wardha Syllabus '.

education must produce a new generation with opportunities of understanding its own problems and rights and obligations. For this purpose we need a completely new system of education that will secure at least the minimum of education required for the intelligent exercise of rights and duties of citizenship. Moreover, an intelligent citizen must be able to repay in the form of some useful service what he owes to society as a member of an organized civilized community. The committee has kept to this twofold ideal of citizenship in preparing the curriculum of studies. The *Report* says:

An education which produces drags and parasites—whether rich or poor—stands condemned. It not only impairs the productive capacity and efficiency of society, but also engenders a dangerous and immoral mentality. The scheme is designed to produce ‘workers’ who will look upon all kinds of useful work—including manual labour, even scavenging—as honourable, and who will be both able and willing to stand on their own feet. Such a close relationship of the work done at school to the work of the community will also enable the children to carry the outlook and attitudes acquired in the school environment into the wider world outside. Thus the new scheme which we are advocating will aim at giving the citizens of the future a keen sense of personal worth, dignity and efficiency, and will strengthen in them the desire for self-improvement and social service in a co-operative community.

In fine, the scheme envisages the idea of a co-operative community, in which the motive of social service will dominate all the activities of children during the plastic years of childhood and youth. Even during the period of school education, they will feel

that they are directly and personally co-operating in the great experiment of national education.

Every one will appreciate this ideal of citizenship as an important and necessary feature of the Wardha Scheme.

## CHAPTER V

### WARDHA SCHOOL TEACHERS

IN education, as in many other departments of human life and activity, it is *men* that matter, not method. This truth gained more and more conviction with me as I advanced from year to year during my twenty-three years of teaching. However perfect the system of education, however ideal the method of teaching, however excellent the textbooks and however well-equipped the school, if the method is not handled, and the school is not staffed by proper teachers, any system of education is bound to fail. Much more so, the particular system of education which Mahatmaji has outlined, with its difficult method of teaching and its entirely new outlook on life.

#### I. Special Teachers and Books

The Wardha system requires for its success teachers possessing knowledge, skill, enthusiasm and patriotism, specially selected and trained to teach in Wardha schools. That Gandhiji is fully aware of the need of such teachers is evident from his utterances. He says: 'The village teacher has to be replaced by more competent ones.' To the question, 'Wherefrom are we going to get capable instructors of the kind we require?', he replied:

We have not the staff of teachers who can cope with the new method. But that difficulty applies to

every new venture. Necessity is the mother of invention. Once we realize the necessity for re-orientation of our educational policy, the means of giving effect to it will be found without much difficulty. I am sure that, for a fraction of the time and expense incurred on the present educational system, and the staff to man it, we would easily train all the manual instructors that we should require for our work.

That the working of the new system required specially trained teachers and specially written textbooks was pointed out by several speakers at the conference, particularly the Ministers for Education. They have fully realized the important role teachers have to play, as well as the absolute need for new and suitable books, in the scheme of Wardha education.<sup>1</sup>

Dr Zakir Husain said :

The greatest difficulty in carrying out this scheme will be the paucity of trained teachers. If we have to teach all the subjects through the takli, we cannot pull on with untrained teachers. I myself am a teacher, but if I am asked today to teach all the subjects through spinning, I shall have to encounter great difficulties. Of course, if I have with me books which show the way of correlating general education with the various processes of cloth-making, I shall be able to teach my students with the help of these books. The preparation of such textbooks will require some time and labour.

Prof N. R. Malkani of Delhi also made the same remark :

I suggest that in order to give a fair chance to

<sup>1</sup> This is the reason why the C.P. Government have begun by starting a Training School at Wardha, and the other Congress Provincial Governments are sending teachers to that school for training, before starting 'Wardha schools' in their provinces.

Mahatmaji's scheme training centres should be opened for preparing a new class of artisan-teachers and committees should be appointed to prepare suitable textbooks.

The Hon Sri B. G. Kher, Minister for Education, Bombay, said similarly:

Gandhiji's scheme requires teachers imbued with feelings of national service. If we are able to find such teachers, I am sure the scheme is bound to succeed.

The Hon Dr P. Subbarayan, Minister for Education, Madras, also emphasized the same point:

The question of curriculum and trained teachers imparting the new system of education should be considered at the earliest possible date, and arrangements should be made for training teachers who will understand the question of education through handicraft.

The Hon Sri Viswanath Das, Minister for Education, Orissa, likewise suggested:

The education that is proposed to be imparted demands new books, a different type of teacher and altogether a different atmosphere. May I, therefore, suggest that you appoint groups of educationists, not only to draw up a detailed syllabus, but also to write new textbooks on the lines adumbrated.

The committee too is fully conscious of the importance of having specially trained teachers. It is therefore that it devotes a whole section of the first *Report* to this subject. The section begins with laying emphasis on this point:

The proper training of teachers is perhaps the most

important condition for the success of this scheme. Even in normal circumstances the quality of the teachers generally determines the quality of the education imparted. When a radical reconstruction of the entire educational system is contemplated, the importance of the teachers who work out these changes is greatly accentuated.

It is, therefore, essential that these teachers should have an understanding of the new educational and social ideology inspiring the scheme, combined with enthusiasm for working it out.

An equal emphasis is laid by the committee on the preparation of suitable books. The first *Report* says:

Entirely new textbooks, permeated with the new spirit, are also essential. The Board of Education in each province and the Central Institute of National Education will be able to render valuable help in this connexion. The provinces which propose to establish the new type of school, must institute the requisite machinery for the preparation of these necessary books and materials at the earliest possible date.

## II. Selection of Teachers

As the quality of the teachers generally determines the quality of the education imparted, and as the Wardha system involves a difficult process of education, special care has to be taken in the *selection* of teachers. The committee is fully conscious of this cardinal need and says: 'The problem of selecting suitable candidates for training should be carefully and completely examined, and a reliable technique of selection evolved. We are convinced that unless this difficult problem is tackled, the scheme will have little chance of success.'

(a) *Two Suggestions.* The committee makes two important suggestions in the matter of selecting teachers. The first is the choice of the 'social type' of teacher:

Teaching requires special social and moral aptitudes and qualities, and it is not right to assume that everyone who volunteers to enter the profession is suitable for it. We must, therefore, conduct our selection with great care and forethought and preferably take only those who belong to what the psychologists call the 'social type'.

The second suggestion is that 'preference should be given to those who belong to the locality in which the school is situated'. Both these are very important considerations. Unless we get the social type of teacher, there is little chance for the scheme to succeed. Unless the teachers belong to the same locality in which the school is situated, they will not have sufficient incentive to identify themselves with the welfare of the school, and of the children and the village. If we continue our present method of transferring teachers frequently from place to place, from school to school, which surely leads to discontent among teachers, the Wardha Scheme will not succeed. This peculiar scheme presupposes that the teacher lives in the same village and works in the same school with the feeling that the village and its school are his own and that their progress and prosperity are his personal concern.

(b) *Standard of Attainments.* What should be the academic qualifications that a teacher should possess in order to be selected for training? The committee thinks that 'to gain admission to the training institution, the candidate must have read up to the *matriculation*

*standard* in some national or recognized Government institution, or must have had at least two years' teaching experience after passing the Vernacular Final or some equivalent examination'. The same view was held at the Conference by Hon Dr Syed Mahmud.

But one may reasonably question the adequacy of this qualification for all teachers in a Wardha school. It is no wonder, then, if Hon Pundit Ravishankar Shukla, another Education Minister, expressed his doubt, and observed at the Conference: ' I personally think that it will not be possible for these matriculates to teach all the subjects through handicrafts.' This view is justifiable, for the committee says in the first *Report*: ' We also contemplate that for teaching the *higher classes* of the school, it may be necessary to employ some teachers with higher academic qualifications, and for them a somewhat higher pay will have to be provided.'

Thus the position will be that there may be teachers of different academic qualifications. The minimum must be the matriculation certificate and graduates in arts and science should also be attracted to this service. The average teacher in a Wardha school will be a matriculate, getting a salary of Rs. 20 or Rs. 25, and in each school there may be two or three graduate teachers getting higher pay, say, Rs. 40.

(c) *Present Teachers.* At this stage a question naturally arises: When the present schools are converted into Wardha schools, what will be the fate of the present teachers? In fact, during one of his numerous talks on his scheme of education, an education officer put this question to Gandhiji in this form:

‘Before we can give this kind of education, we shall have to wipe out the present generation of teachers?’ To this Gandhiji gave the following reply which must be reassuring to the present teachers:

No. There is no intermediate stage. You must make a start and prepare the teachers whilst you go through the process.

And in an article, making his idea clearer, he said:

The existing staff of teachers, if they are willing to learn, should be given the opportunity of doing so, and should also have the immediate prospect of a substantial increase in their salaries if they will learn the necessary subjects. . . . It may be that some of the primary school teachers are so ill-equipped that they cannot learn the new subjects within a short time. But a boy who has studied up to the matriculation standard should not take more than three months to learn the elements of music, drawing, physical drill and a handicraft. If he acquires a working knowledge of these, he will be able always to add to it while he is teaching.

From the foregoing passage we may infer that Gandhiji thinks that such of the present teachers as have the matriculation standard of education or, in the case of Madras Presidency secondary-grade trained teachers, will be allowed to continue teaching in the Wardha type of school, provided, of course, they undergo at least the shorter course of training contemplated (and explained below), and that the present class of teachers who are ‘higher-elementary trained’ will have to be wiped out. Thus arises the dilemma: if the higher elementary teachers continue, the Wardha system will be a failure, and if they are sent out, they will swell

considerably the numbers of the unemployed. We may leave it to the Provincial Governments to rebut this dilemma.

(d) *Women Teachers.* One more point worth keeping in mind in selecting teachers for a Wardha school is the suitability of women teachers. Sri Kakasaheb Kalelkar remarked at the Conference: 'I suggest that women should be given preference over men as primary teachers.' Referring to this remark, Gandhiji wrote in the *Harijan* of October 30, 1937:

One of the speakers at the conference emphasized the fact that education of little boys and girls could be more effectively handled by women than men and by mothers rather than maidens. Here is undoubtedly an opportunity for patriotic women with leisure to offer their services to a cause which ranks amongst the noblest of all causes. But if they come forward, they will have to go through a sound preliminary training. Needy women in search of a living will serve no useful purpose by thinking of joining the movement as a career. If they approach the scheme, they should do so in a spirit of pure service and make it a life mission. They will fail and be severely disappointed if they approach it in a selfish spirit. If the cultured women of India will make common cause with the villagers, and that too through their children, they will produce a silent and grand revolution in the village life of India. Will they respond?

Indeed, some will respond; but the number of those who will come up to the ideal of Mahatmaji may be insufficient, and we may have to select women teachers for admission to the training course on the same basis as men teachers and also pay them more or less the same salary as the latter. If so, we may get a sufficient

number of unmarried and married women who, as Sri Kalelkar observed, may also be employed as teachers; but mainly for teaching the smaller children of the Wardha schools, as Gandhiji admits in the first sentence of the above passage.

### III. Conscription and Persuasion

(a) *Conscription.* In order to find the army of teachers required to run the thousands of Wardha schools when they are started, Prof K. T. Shah suggested (in an article in the *Harijan* of July 31, 1937) the method of conscription, and demonstrated its value by citing instances from Italy and other lands. This idea of conscripting teachers, wrote a high educational officer in a letter to Gandhiji, was an 'outrage'. Perhaps others too may think that the idea is not practicable, if not an outrage. They think that men and women who voluntarily come forward dedicating their lives to the teaching profession, will be allowed to teach without adequate training for the profession, on the assumption that everyone is a born teacher. They are entirely mistaken in their view as will be evident from the following passages, which answer the two points raised above.

(i) As regards the idea of conscription, Gandhiji says that Prof Shah's idea is 'substantial, quite feasible, and deserves the greatest consideration'. He believes that the services of the existing educated young men and women can be generally impressed. It will not be unless there is a general willing response from that body. 'They responded, however feebly, during the civil disobedience campaign. Will they fail to respond to the call for constructive service against maintenance money?' The meaning of 'maintenance

money' is explained by Gandhiji in his article in the *Harijan* of July 31, 1937: 'They may be conscripted to give a number of years, say five, to the teaching for which they may be qualified, *on a salary not exceeding their maintenance* on a scale in keeping with the economic level of the country.'

Supporting the idea of conscription, Gandhiji said at the Conference:

If Mussolini could impress the youth of Italy for the service of his country, why should not we? Is it fair to label as slavery the compulsory enlistment to service of our youth for a year or longer before they began their careers? Youths have contributed a lot to the success of the movement for freedom during the past seventeen years, and I call upon them to give freely a year of their lives to the service of the nation. Legislation, if it is necessary in this respect, will not be compulsion, as it could not be passed without the consent of the majority of our representatives.

(ii) As regards the charge that teachers thus conscripted will not all be born teachers and will only be experimenting in their ignorance on the children of the Wardha schools, Gandhiji says:

If we have to wait till we have born teachers, we shall have to wait till the Judgement Day for them. I submit that teachers will have to be trained on a wholesale scale during the shortest term possible.

From the above passages a few conclusions may now be deduced. Mahatmaji has shown that conscription is possible, and teachers thus called to the profession of teaching can enter upon this profession only after being trained for it. But there is some uncertainty as to the number of years of conscription: in one place

he says 'say, five years', while in another passage he says 'for a year or longer'. For those whose eyes are turned to other professions, five years will be too long a period of waiting, while one year is too short a period for a few months training and entry into the teaching profession, only to get out of it a few months later in order to enter upon a life's career. Therefore, at least two years of conscription will be reasonable and justifiable.

(b) *Persuasion*. Whether conscripted teaching is voluntarily embraced or enforced by legislation, conscripted teachers cannot come up to the standard of suitability adumbrated by the committee. The best teachers will be those who voluntarily adopt teaching as their *vocation in life*, and to get at such teachers *persuasion* is the best method of approach. As Gandhiji said: 'I think the problem of new teachers can be solved, if we *persuade* the young men . . .' There is reason to believe that, with the spread of national education on the lines of the Wardha Scheme, we may gradually get an adequate number of teachers who are imbued with the missionary spirit of service and sacrifice, to follow the Gandhian ideal of national service through national education. Indeed, it may not be possible today to get a sufficient number of teachers to work on Rs. 20 or even Rs. 25 per month, because the present generation is the fruit of the past system of education. When a new generation with a new national outlook on life emerges out of the first and second batches of Wardha schools, we may get the required number of teachers who will consecrate their lives to national service in the field of national education.

#### IV. Courses of Training

From the foregoing study of the problem of getting teachers it is evident that different types of men will be coming in to serve as teachers in the Wardha schools—the present teachers, the raw products of conscription, and those who embrace teaching as their vocation in life. Realizing the varying needs of these different types of men and women to be trained, the committee has judiciously provided for two different courses of training.

(a) *Two Courses.* The committee outlined in the first *Report* two courses of training—one a longer and fuller course of three years and the other a shorter one of only one year. The longer course is intended for those who adopt teaching as their career; they are not birds of passage in the profession. Naturally, therefore, they need a fuller, reasonably thorough, and continuous course of three years. But for others who are in the profession at present, with whom we have to make a start with Wardha schools, who cannot in the nature of their circumstances undergo a long course of training and yet must have some training in teaching according to the Wardha system, a short 'emergency course' of one year's training is necessarily provided. To this course will be admitted only those teachers 'selected from existing schools, national institutions and ashrams'.

(b) *A Shorter Course.* Now, there is a third type of person—sufficiently numerous we may presume—who will come in as fresh recruits, but only for a year or two of conscripted teaching. For them even one

full year's training will be too much. There is need, therefore, for a third course of training—perhaps of two or three months of intensive work—in the art of teaching. Even though the committee has not made provision for such a compendious course, it may be noted that Gandhiji has himself suggested it (*ante* p. 70), and such a training course is now being given at Wardha.<sup>1</sup> Without such a course it is inadvisable to permit raw products of the present or even of the later (Wardha) schools to enter upon teaching. The task of planning and running such a short course may well be left to the Provincial Governments and their respective Education Departments.

<sup>1</sup> This short course is described in the chapter on 'The Wardha Experiment'.

## CHAPTER VI

### QUERIES ON THE SCHEME

THOUGH the foregoing exposition of the fundamental as well as of the secondary features of the scheme must have cleared many obscure points connected with it, there are still many other points on which people may like to have more light. In public speeches and in letters written to the press many queries have been raised, and it is advantageous to answer at least the most important of them with a view to clearing doubts, and thereby enabling the public to have a clear grasp of this novel scheme of education.

1. *Can everything be taught through a craft?*  
This is an important question. Some are of opinion that, although many subjects can be correlated with the basic craft, every subject and every aspect of a subject cannot be taught through a craft. Shall we leave them out altogether? This question Gandhiji answered at the Conference thus: 'No. We will teach *as much* of these subjects through the takli (or any other basic craft) *as possible*. The rest we cannot leave untouched.' And the Resolution of the Conference also says '(every subject) . . . should, *as far as possible*, be integrally related to the central handicraft. . . .' Sri Mashruwala too thinks so: 'Other matters in the above subjects (i.e., those not possible to be correlated with the craft) will not be omitted.' In the Wardha school time-table, provision will have to be made to supplement the knowledge thus correlated with

the craft, by additional classes so as to bring up the knowledge in a particular subject to the matriculation standard.

2. *Why is special emphasis laid on spinning and weaving?* Let Mahatmaji himself answer this question as it is he who has conceived the scheme and emphasized this point. At the Conference he said:

I am especially mentioning the takli and emphasizing its utility, because I have realized its power and its romance; also because the handicraft of making cloth is the only one which can be taught throughout the country; and because the takli is very cheap. If you have any other suitable handicraft to suggest, please do so without any hesitation so that we might consider it as well. But I am convinced that takli is the only practical solution of our problem, considering the deplorable economic conditions prevailing in the country.

Sri Mushruwala's explanation of the point will also help to make the answer clearer and fuller. He says:

It is submitted that hand-spinning and hand-weaving is the only industry in India, in which an unlimited number of workers can be employed. India has the natural advantages of raw materials and enormous man-power for specialization in that industry. She has also the tradition for it, having been for centuries the sole manufacturer of cotton fabrics for the world.

These are cogent arguments in favour of adopting spinning and weaving as the most suitable basic craft. Apart from the facilities offered by it from the educational point of view, it helps the recovery of the ancient glory of India, which, as is known to students of ancient

and medieval history of the West as well as of the East, was the pride of our country during the pre-East-India-Company days; and also helps to hasten the economic, if not the political, independence of the country by a silent, yet effective, social revolution.

3. *Cannot other handicrafts also be adopted as Basic Crafts?* Once somebody put this question to Gandhiji: 'As you have been thinking of spinning and weaving, evidently you are thinking of making these schools so many weaving schools. A child may have no aptitude for weaving and may have it for something else.' To this Gandhiji replied: 'Quite so. Then we will teach him some other craft.'

The committee too thinks so, for the *Report* says: 'In view of the diversity of pupils' interests we recommend that as far as possible a variety of crafts should be provided for, at least during the last two years of the school course.' The syllabus has provided for other crafts like agriculture, and cardboard-, wood- and metal-work as alternatives to spinning and weaving, and has also provided for additional crafts in the last two years (Grades VI and VII), viz., tape and duree weaving and also an optional course in wood- or metal-work.

4. *Can one school teach all or many crafts?* Gandhiji's reply to this question not only answers this query, but throws light also on another important aspect, viz., school organization. He says:

You must know that one school will not teach many crafts. The idea is that we should have one teacher for twenty-five boys, and you may have as many classes or schools of twenty-five boys as you have teachers available, and have each of these schools

specializing in a separate craft—carpentry, smithy, tanning or shoe-making.

This view of 'one school, one craft' may not be a practical solution, for that would mean a number of Wardha schools, with seven standards, in a single village to cater to the tastes of boys and girls with varying aptitudes. Perhaps we may have a few schools, each one having a few crafts of a similar nature or greater affinity, in larger villages or in groups of smaller neighbouring villages.

*5. What about advanced courses in these crafts?*

Advanced courses and institutions are contemplated by Gandhiji, for he says: 'If they must be civil and mechanical engineers, they will, after the seven years course, go to the special colleges meant for these higher and specialized courses.' And Sri Mashruwala says that the Basic Course will include a fair acquaintance with a vocation 'to a degree which should enable (a pupil) . . . to take up a course of higher general or vocational training'. The Hon Dr Syed Mahmud, Minister for Education, Bihar, said at the Conference: 'The seven-year course of primary education is quite necessary; but, as Dr Zakir Husain has pointed out, we should provide for some specialized course of two or three years after the primary stage.' In fact, for those desiring to have greater knowledge of, and skill in, a particular craft, it is necessary, and possible, to proceed from a Wardha school to a special and advanced institution like a School of Arts, Textile Institute or School of Technology, and pupils could, after two or three years of an advanced course, take a diploma in any particular art or craft.

6. *Are seven years needed to study a craft?* Once this question was put to Gandhiji: 'Supposing a boy takes up the art and science of making khadi. Do you think it must occupy him all the seven years to master the craft?' And his reply was: 'Yes. It must, if he will not learn it mechanically. Why do we give years to the study of history or to the study of languages? Is a craft any the less important than these subjects which have been up to now given an artificial importance?'

7. *Will there be other types of schools?* This is an important question. Wherever Wardha schools are started, will there be schools following any other type of education? Gandhiji's view is that his scheme 'does not absolve the State from running such seminaries as may be required for supplying State needs'. (The *Harijan*, October 2, 1937.)

8. *What will happen to the present schools?* When in any area Wardha schools are started, shall we close down the present primary and secondary schools? This important and practical issue was raised at the Conference, and Gandhiji replied: 'I have no hesitation in making an affirmative answer. But it is for the Ministers to decide finally. I think that, if the present teachers accept my scheme, there will be no difficulty in overhauling the present schools. In places where there are no schools at all, we can easily start institutions of the type suggested by me.'

The initial expenses of starting new schools wherever there are no schools at all and of transforming the present schools into Wardha schools will certainly need more money than the Provincial Governments could

find now, and more time than impatient admirers of the scheme would allow. What does the committee say on these two points? The second *Report* says:

We are fully alive to the financial implications of this great educational enterprise, but we think that it should be possible for Provincial Governments to put this scheme into full working order and introduce compulsory and free universal education in the whole country in about 20 to 25 years time. What we suggest is the drawing up of a kind of 20-year plan to provide basic education and to liquidate illiteracy.

There is undoubtedly practical wisdom in these suggestions of the committee. Each Provincial Government should immediately set about making a survey of each district and village and then adopt a 20-year plan for the expansion of education, and the plan should provide for a certain number of Wardha schools to be started in places where at present there are no schools, and for a certain number of the present schools to be gradually transformed into Wardha schools, in a year. Thus slowly, but steadily, in a period of, say, 20 years the scheme could be in full working order throughout the length and breadth of the country.

9. *Can this system succeed in cities and towns?* Owing to the ignorance of the people on the Wardha Scheme, many are under the wrong impression that Gandhiji's scheme is meant only for the villages. He said at the Conference: 'The educational scheme that we wish to place before the country must be *primarily* for the villages.' So, not *exclusively*, but *primarily*, for the villages. In his article in the *Harijan* of October 9, 1937, on 'Primary Education in Bombay', he has made himself quite clear. A friend interested in the

question of primary education in the city of Bombay wrote to Gandhiji:

It would be worth while to examine as to how and to what extent this can be done in the case of a city like Bombay. . . . At present over twenty lakhs of rupees are annually spent (by the Bombay Corporation) on teachers' salaries, while another four lakhs go as rent. This gives an average of Rs. 40 to Rs. 42 for each student. Can a student earn this amount in the course of his vocational training? and if not, then how can primary education be made self-supporting?

To this Gandhiji replied as follows:

I have no doubt in my mind that the city of Bombay and its children would only stand to gain by adopting a vocational basis for primary education. At present all that these children can show at the end of their primary education course is not worth much and certainly not calculated to fit them for citizenship. I have no hesitation in recommending the adoption of a vocational basis (not bias) for primary education for cities. . . . What kinds of vocations are the fittest for being taught to children in urban schools? There is no hard and fast rule about it.

From this it is clear that Gandhiji does not think that the Wardha system is good only for the villages. Therefore, it follows that the 20-year plan of expansion mentioned above should cover urban areas as well.

The article in which Gandhiji has answered this query contains two significant passages which embody his philosophy of the relationship (i) between individuals

in a social group and (ii) between the village and the city. Let us, therefore, have them *in extenso*:

1. I am a firm believer in the principle of free and compulsory primary education for India. I also hold that we shall realize this only by teaching the children a useful vocation and utilizing it as a means for cultivating their mental, physical and spiritual faculties. Let no one consider these economic calculations in connexion with education as sordid, or out of place. There is nothing essentially sordid about economic calculations. True economics never militates against the highest ethical standard, just as all true ethics to be worth its name must at the same time be also good economics. An economics that inculcates mammon worship, and enables the strong to amass wealth at the expense of the weak, is a false and dismal science. It spells death. True economics, on the other hand, stands for social justice, it promotes the good of all equally, including the weakest, and is indispensable to decent life. I therefore make bold to suggest that Bombay would be setting a noble example for the whole country to follow if, by teaching its children a useful industry, it can make primary education pay its way.

2. I want to resuscitate the villages of India. Today our villages have become a mere appendage to the cities. They exist, as it were, to be exploited by the latter and depend on the latter's sufferance. This is unnatural. It is only when the cities realize the duty of making an adequate return to the villages for the strength and sustenance which they derive from them, instead of selfishly exploiting them, that a healthy and moral relationship between the two will spring up. And if the city children are to play their part in this great and noble work of social reconstruction, the vocations through which they are to achieve

their education ought to be directly related to the requirements of the villages. So far as I can see the various processes of cotton manufacture from ginning and cleaning of cotton to the spinning of yarn, answer this test as nothing else does. Even today the cotton is grown in the villages and is ginned and spun and converted into cloth in the cities. But the chain of processes which cotton undergoes in the mills from the beginning to the end constitutes a huge tragedy of waste in men, materials and mechanical power.

My plan to impart primary education through the medium of village handicrafts like spinning and carding, etc., is thus conceived as the spear-head of a silent social revolution fraught with the most far-reaching consequences. It will provide a healthy and moral basis of relationship between the city and the village and thus go a long way towards eradicating some of the worst evils of the present social insecurity and poisoned relationship between the classes. It will check the progressive decay of our villages and lay the foundation of a juster social order in which there is no unnatural division between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' and everybody is assured of a living wage and the right to freedom. And all this would be accomplished without the horrors of a bloody class war or a colossal capital expenditure such as would be involved in the mechanization of a vast continent like India. Nor would it entail a helpless dependence on foreign imported machinery or technical skill. Lastly, by obviating the necessity for highly specialized talent, it would place the destiny of the masses, as it were, in their own hands. But who will bell the cat? Will the city folk listen to me at all? Or, will mine remain a mere cry in the wilderness? Replies to these and similar questions will depend

more on lovers of education, like my correspondent, living in cities than on me.

10. *What about college education?* Gandhiji's scheme of education which we have been examining is 'a scheme of universal and compulsory basic education', and, as the committee points out, it is 'to be followed in due course by higher education for those who are qualified to receive it; and when that scheme is drawn up, it will have to be co-ordinated with the scheme of basic education so as to ensure continuity as well as proper intellectual equipment for those who are to proceed further with their education'.

Gandhiji's plan is hinted at in the four propositions he originally enunciated (vide pp. 3-5):

Higher education should be left to private enterprise and should be to meet national requirements whether in the various industries, technical arts, belles-lettres or fine arts.

This plan is made clear in his article in the *Harijan* of July 31, 1937:

I would revolutionize college education and relate it to national necessities. There would be degrees for mechanical and other engineers. They would be attached to the different industries which should pay for the training of the graduates they need. Thus Tatas would be expected to run a college for training engineers under the supervision of the State, the mill associations would run among them a college for training graduates whom they need. Similarly for the other industries that may be named. Commerce would have its college. There remain arts, medicines and agriculture. Several private Arts Colleges are today self-supporting. The State would, therefore, cease to run its own. Medical colleges would be

attached to certified hospitals. As they are popular among monied men they may be expected by voluntary contributions to support medical colleges. And agricultural colleges to be worthy of the name must be self-supporting. I have a painful experience of some agricultural graduates. Their knowledge is superficial. They lack practical experience. But if they had their apprenticeship on farms which are self-sustained and answer the requirements of the country, they would not have to gain experience after getting their degrees and at the expense of their employers.

In the light of this view so clearly and so forcibly expressed by Mahatmaji, the Congress Governments will, it is presumed, examine the problem of maintaining, at an enormous cost, so many Government colleges, and consider how far the field of higher education could be left to the initiative and co-operation of well-established and financially stable private organizations and societies which have won a reputation for imparting sound education and have a tradition of good work in the field of higher education.

## CHAPTER VII

### CRITICISMS OF THE SCHEME

DURING the past twelve months, in the press and on the platform, have appeared many critics of the Wardha Scheme. When we scrutinize the nature of the critics and of their criticisms, they fall into three broad classes. To the first group belong those who criticize it because they are politically opposed to the party whose outstanding leader has originated the scheme and whose Ministers have strongly supported it. To try to convert them to the cause of the scheme is to attempt the impossible. To the second group belong those who have not grasped the fundamental ideas and ideals underlying the scheme, and yet have attacked the scheme either in its entirety or on some of its cardinal features. Indeed, to a generation of men who have been nurtured on the 'old order', and particularly those among them who are advanced in years, it is really difficult to understand and appreciate the basic revolutionary principles underlying the scheme; we can only make an attempt to convert them. To the third group belong those who are anxious to usher in a new system of education in order to create a new order of things in the country in conformity with the ideals of nationalism and the true genius of our people. They are sincere supporters of the scheme, but, owing to their ignorance on many obscure points, they too have entered the arena as critics. Them we shall enlighten; and we can succeed in making them ardent supporters of the new system

by answering the various points of criticism levelled against the Wardha Scheme.

Already some points of criticism have been incidentally answered in the course of the exposition and examination in previous chapters. That a sound system of education is the one which enables a boy to learn by doing; that it is possible to teach various cultural subjects of study through the medium of a craft; that Gandhiji's scheme can be self-supporting in the sense in which he understands it; that only a system like this could liquidate illiteracy in a poor country like India within a reasonable period of time; that the existing schools and the present teachers are not going to be wiped out of existence, but will be absorbed into the new scheme; that the Wardha boys and girls can proceed to higher studies for which there will be special and advanced institutions; and that it is suitable both for the villages and for the cities in the country—have already been explained at some length. In this chapter we will examine the other points of criticism so that more light on obscure aspects and problems may help to dispel darkness and doubt as to the feasibility of the new Wardha Scheme of education. Various points of criticism are grouped together under topics for convenience of examination.

## **I. The Theory of Self-supporting Education**

1. *Duty of the State.* It is said that it is the first duty of the State to give free and compulsory primary education to all children. The critics forget two points worth noting. Indeed, to spend on *elementary or primary* education is a fundamental duty of the State, but the Wardha Scheme, as explained already,

comprises elementary and secondary education; and, even according to the critics, the State need not spend on secondary education as it is not a fundamental duty of the State. So, the whole cost of Wardha education need not be borne by the State. What the scheme contemplates is to find some money for the extra that is needed, through self-supporting education. Secondly, a poor country like India cannot find *all* the crores of rupees needed to give the crores of her children even elementary education. Under the scheme, the State will, of course, supply some crores to meet the expenditure on school buildings and equipment as well as on numerous recurring items of expense other than the teachers' salaries. It is only this last item of expenditure—teachers' salaries—which itself will need some crores—that the self-supporting nature of the scheme is intended to supply. Thus, it must be remembered, the self-supporting feature goes only a part of the way to relieve the poor State of its obligation in the matter of spreading elementary education. The State does not absolve itself of the entire responsibility in the matter. And if by having self-supporting education, we can kill two or even more birds, viz., finding the necessary money, and that by giving children true education, why should the critics attack the scheme?

2. *Waste of Raw Materials.* 'Are we not to allow for a great deal of wastage in raw materials when handled by little boys?' To this Gandhiji's answer is: 'Of course, there will be wastage, but there will be even at the end of the first year some gain by each pupil. In the beginning there is bound to be some waste in the village schools; but a clever and tactful

teacher will see that the boys learn most with least waste.' No one need accept this, because Mahatmaji has said so. On the point of wastage, what does the committee say? In estimating the output of the schools and their savings it has made allowance for this wastage. The *Report* says in connexion with spinning:

It should be a matter of special attention on the part of the teacher that there should be no wastage of yarn (from breaking, etc.) from the very earliest stage in the processes of spinning, whether on the takli or on the charkha. 10% wastage is, however, usually allowed (including 5% in carding), pieces of yarn being calculated so as to cover this . . . 25% deduction has been made from the total estimated output for absence due to illness, and other causes (which causes include this wastage).

It was after taking into consideration the wastage, that the committee submitted its calculations and showed the practicability of the self-supporting nature of the scheme in the sense explained already.

3. *Sale of School Products.* 'Who will buy the products of these children?' This is another of the contemptuous criticisms. The critics forget that people imbued with patriotism will buy the products of the children of their own village, and the State or Government offices will be proud to buy their requirements from the children of the State. Did not Queen Elizabeth enforce burials in Dundee linen, though more costly than the foreign cloth which the English nation imported from abroad, in the age of mercantilism in the sixteenth century? Did not the English nation willingly obey the law of the land out of patriotism with a view

to help indigenous industries? It is a pity British History is taught to Indian boys only to make them pass public examinations, and not to imbue them, like the British, with a love for their land and people! The generation of men and women who will be educated under the Wardha system will, therefore, be animated by a new outlook of love for their country, and will buy the products of our children. The departments of the Government will purchase their requirements from co-operative stores stocking the products of our schools.

4. *Factory Labour.* 'The necessity to find money for educational purposes has driven Gandhiji to introduce labour and slavery into schools and thus turn them into factories.' Indeed, a serious charge. Even at the conference a dissentient voice was raised by Prof Shah who said: 'By trying to make education self-supporting you will create in the boys from the very beginning a feeling of exchange-motive which is, by no means, desirable. I am sure that, if you involve the students in this economic muddle at the age of 7, a kind of slavery would creep in.' How does Gandhiji feel about the matter? Let us have a few extracts from his speeches and writings:

(i) Each of us must work eight hours a day. Nobody becomes a slave by working. Just as we do not become slaves of our parents at home when we carry out their instructions, so the question of slavery should not arise at all in our proposed schools.

(ii) It is said that my scheme will bring about slavery in the schools. But this can be said about all good things, because in bad hands even the good things become bad.

Referring to a writer, Gandhiji said:

(iii) The writer has not taken the trouble to understand my plan. He condemns himself when he likens the boys in the schools of my imagination to the boys on the semi-slave plantations of Ceylon. He forgets that the boys on the plantations are not treated as students. Their labour is no part of their training. In the schools I advocate, boys have all that boys learn in high schools less English, but plus drill, music, drawing, and of course, a vocation. To call these factories amounts to an obstinate refusal to appreciate a series of facts. It is very like a man refusing to read the description of a human being and calling him a monkey, because he has seen no other animal but a monkey, and because the description in some particulars, but only in some, answers that of monkeys. (*The Harijan*, September 18, 1937.)

(iv) The fact that the whole person in the boys and girls has to be developed through a vocation automatically saves the schools from degenerating into factories. For, over and above the required degree of proficiency in the vocation in which they are trained, boys and girls will have to show equal proficiency in the other subjects they will be expected to learn. (*The Harijan*, October 30, 1937.)

## II. Craft-centred Education

5. *Culture Neglected.* One other important complaint is that this system of education is good only to produce weavers and carpenters, but not really cultured men and women, because it neglects cultural subjects for the sake of crafts. Who is the best authority to pronounce on this aspect of the system? Evidently, teachers; they understand the various processes of education and their influence on culture. Let us hear

the opinion of an expert body like the South Indian Teachers' Union—perhaps the most important permanent organization of the teaching profession in South India, if not the whole of India—which is to the teaching profession today what the Medical Council is to the medical profession. Having studied the scheme carefully and minutely, the Union submitted a *Report*, in which it is stated:

The subjects included in the scheme and the objectives proposed are quite suitable and adequate for the children of the age-group 7 to 14, since literature, sciences, humanities, art, craft and aesthetics, are all represented. There is no justification for the fear that culture will be neglected in the Wardha Scheme.

And in *The New Review*,<sup>1</sup> one of the most important journals in the country, published by the Jesuits who have a well-earned reputation as educationists all the world over, in a scholarly article under the caption 'Light from Wardha', the following opinion on this feature of the scheme is given by its editor:

There is, then, no cause for alarm in the Wardha decision to educate village children *through* a handicraft. Rather, they are much more likely to be educated in this natural way than they would in the artificial, unreal, and unintelligent way of our existing primary schools. They may know less of each subject (besides their chosen handicraft) than now; but they will certainly know that little more

<sup>1</sup> This is a scholarly monthly journal dealing with education, politics, economics, sociology, philosophy and history. It is published at 30, Park Street, Calcutta, and is edited by an Indian Jesuit Father—Rev. T. N. Sequiera, S.J., M.A. (Lit.). Annual subscription, Rs. 8.

intelligently, more vitally; and they will on the whole turn out better men—which is, after all, the only test of education.

Under this system, pedagogically the pupil *assimilates* all the subjects he learns, because they are integrated naturally and almost originally into the child's concrete personality. Indeed, great importance is assigned to the handicraft, but cultural subjects are not neglected. The system is also an illustration of Lord Brougham's principle: 'Everything of something and something of everything.' In the Wardha Scheme, that something of which everything is studied, is a useful craft—useful for educative purposes as well as for the future occupation in life. The training in a craft is intended not only to prepare a boy for his future career and to earn his bread, but for educative purposes. As the committee emphasized in the first *Report*: 'The object of this new educational scheme is *not* primarily the production of craftsmen able to practise some craft mechanically, but rather the *exploitation for educative purposes of the resources implicit in the craft work.*'

It is not fair to look upon this as a scheme to produce weavers and carpenters: it will give our children 'the literacy of the whole personality'; it will give to villages educated weavers and carpenters to fill places of responsibility in civic administration as in Athens in the days of her perfect democracy, the Age of Pericles; and it will give to the country men and women of real culture and true patriotism.

6. *Unbalanced Time-table.* Perhaps this doubt arises out of the fact that the committee proposes to allot 3 hours and 20 minutes of every working day of

the school to craftwork. This is perhaps the most universal complaint against the Wardha Scheme. Let us first have a look at the time-table as proposed by the committee.

The basic craft	...	...	3 hours 20 minutes
Music, drawing, arithmetic	...		40 minutes
The mother-tongue	...		40 minutes
Social studies and general			
science	...	...	30 minutes
Physical training	...		10 minutes
Recess	...	...	10 minutes

5 hours 30 minutes

Indeed, a side-glance at the time allotted to each subject does make one jump to the conclusion that the craft dominates the time-table and that too much time is allotted to craftwork. Now, what does the South Indian Teachers' Union say on this point in its *Report*? The Union considers it necessary 'to remind the public that 3 hours and 20 minutes for craftwork is the *maximum* provided and that this latitude in respect of working hours allotted to the basic craft should allay any fear that the craft will receive undue emphasis'.

Let us now hear the Zakir Husain Committee's explanation given in the second *Report*:

Much criticism has been directed against the amount of time devoted to craftwork, and it has been argued that academic work will be starved in consequence. Without subscribing to the implied dualism between practical and academic work, we would point out that the time allotted to the basic craft is *not meant to be spent only on the mechanical*

*practice of the craft*, but oral work, drawing and expression work, naturally connected with it, as well as instruction in the why and wherefore of the processes involved, i.e., their scientific and intelligent understanding, which is one important educative aspect of the craftwork, will also be given during this time.

This explanation by the committee ought to be an effective answer to critics. The arrangement of timetables and the process of instruction on a particular subject and in a given hour or period are matters well known to teachers. However, for the sake of non-teachers whose goodwill and support we have to carry with us when introducing the scheme, let me explain the point further. The first point to realize is that all the 3 hours and 20 minutes will not be one continuous period of instruction, but will be spread over the whole day, so that in the forenoon, they may have, say, 2 hours and in the afternoon 1 hour and 20 minutes, which may again be divided into periods of shorter duration according to the scheme of the general timetable of the school. In fact, realizing the strain of a continuous period of instruction, both for the teacher and for the pupils, the committee has provided short intervals of 10 minutes (see the chapter on 'The Wardha Syllabus', p. 119). Secondly, it must be realized that in a given period, provision is made in the syllabus for practical and theoretical instruction; and therefore, there is no continuous mechanical practice of the craft, practical work being interspersed with the teaching of theory. Both theory and practice together make up 3 hours 20 minutes. Thirdly, even under practical work, there are moments when no

physical or mechanical work is to be done by the pupil. For example, under 'Agriculture—Practical' are given the following items:

5. Study of roots of cotton, jowar, tur and gram.

8. Boys to observe and to note the time of opening of flowers in their garden.

And under 'Spinning and Weaving, Grade II, Second Term', item 6 reads: 'During this term the process of calculating the count of yarn produced should be taught'; and 'Grade III, First Term', item 1 is: 'In this term the students should be taught to recognize the different types of cotton. They should also learn to estimate the length of fibre and to understand the count of yarn which can be produced from each different type of cotton.'

From this explanation, given for the sake of the layman, it is sufficiently clear that there is no physical strain involved in the study of the craft as a first look at the time-table might lead one to imagine. Let me assure parents that their children will not be killed under the weight of 3 hours and 20 minutes of craft study. On the contrary, as I shall point out presently, the little craft *work* interspersed with the *theory* of craft will help considerably to improve their health and develop their muscles and give them some recreation.

7. *A Dull Course of Education.* The emphasis laid on craftwork makes some critics think that the course of education in a Wardha school will be dull and will cramp the child's mind. Mahatmaji himself answered this criticism when he said:

It is a gross superstition to think that this sort of vocational exercise will make education dull, or cramp

the child's mind. Some of my happiest recollections are of the bright and joyful faces of children while they were receiving vocational instruction under competent teachers. As against this, I have also known the most fascinating of subjects boring children when taught in the wrong way by an incompetent instructor.

I may add to this evidence what I have myself seen in the Model School attached to the London Mission Training School at Erode. While going round the classes at work, I went to the First Standard where twenty little boys were having the 'project' of making 'Gandhi caps' with white paper. Having made the caps themselves and having put them on their heads, the little children were instructed in various subjects correlated to this project. I watched with interest and satisfaction how the enthusiastic teacher taught arithmetic, by calculating the number of sheets of paper required to make twenty caps; general science, by explaining different colours; geometry, by explaining ovals and circles; and so on. The children looked cheerful and happy at the thought that they had turned out some useful work; they were alert and active; there was not that dullness and laziness which we witness in our present-day elementary schools either in the teachers or in the pupils. The Wardha school will not have a book-centred (often exercise-book-centred) education; Wardha education follows an 'activity curriculum'; the boys are active and alert, not half-sleepy, passive spectators of what the teacher does; nor passive listeners of a human gramophone placed on a chair in front of them. Indeed, as Gandhiji says, it is a gross superstition and unblissful ignorance to

characterize Wardha education as dull and as cramping the child's mind.

8. *Premature Specialization and Choice of Career.* There is some truth in the criticism that the system leads to specialization in a vocation at a premature age before a boy's natural aptitude can be discovered and that he has therefore to determine his future career at a very early stage. The seriousness of the objection will be lost when one realizes that, as explained before (p. 80), different vocations will be taught in the same school or in different schools in an area, so as to enable a child, or his parents, to choose an occupation with due attention suited to his personal aptitudes and the practical scope which his environment affords for it.

### III. Teachers' Problems

9. *Hardship for Teachers.* It is felt that, from the teachers' point of view, the scheme imposes great hardships on the profession with regard to their work in a Wardha school. Indeed, the teacher in a Wardha school, with its activity curriculum, will not be able to take things as easy as in the present schools. He cannot sit down in his chair or stool comfortably, making child after child read the textbook line after line; nor can he go on dictating notes seated in his chair; nor can he go to sleep, allowing the children to copy out a given lesson or to work out half a dozen sums written on the blackboard. In a Wardha school, the teacher will have to be up and doing—perhaps working all the hour through—making the children learn by doing things, correlating the various subjects with the basic craft taught to the class; going round the

class from boy to boy, correcting the mistakes each one commits and making each one observe the phenomena involved in the craftwork. Indeed, it is a hard job. That is why the Zakir Husain Committee, as already pointed out, lays so much emphasis on the *selection* of teachers for Wardha schools. Unless we get the right type of teacher the scheme is bound to fail.

10. *Teachers' Pay.* Many critics have pointed out that the salary proposed for teachers in Wardha schools is ridiculously low. Sir P. S. Sivaswami Ayyar went to the very root of the matter when he said:

The whole fault with Mr Gandhi's gospel is that he believes that the whole world is as austere as he is. He assumes that all men can be trained to be as austere and abstemious as he is. Apart from a few enthusiasts whom he can gather around him, I do not think his proposition is workable. (*The Madras Mail*, July 15, 1938.)

Certainly, the present generation of educated men and women brought up on the old order of education and life, will find the salary rather low. But the critics forget that the ideals of Gandhiji are today realized, even among the present generation, in the seven Congress Provinces. Witness the fall in the salary of the highest executive officers, from Rs. 5,000 yesterday to Rs. 500 today; witness again the hundreds of applications for teachers' posts with a lower salary from willing and self-sacrificing men and women, of this present generation, who are offering themselves for national service through national education. Thousands more will offer themselves out of the new generation turned out by Wardha schools for this service on 'maintenance money'.

Apart from this aspect of the problem, let us see what the salary actually proposed is. What does the committee say on this point? The first *Report* says:

With regard to the teachers' salaries, we endorse Gandhiji's suggestion that it should, if possible, be Rs. 25 and never less than Rs. 20.

Do all the village teachers of the present day get even Rs. 20? A guaranteed minimum of Rs. 20 a month will be gratifying to teachers, especially when we remember that life in villages is generally cheap and that teachers will not be transferred to distant places, thereby entailing greater expenses, which effectively make a low salary lower still.

And how does the organized opinion of teachers stand in this matter? The *Report* of the South Indian Teachers' Union says:

We feel that the salary proposed is low particularly in view of the qualifications expected of the teachers.<sup>1</sup> But in view of the financial problems that this question presents, we are inclined to recommend that the *initial salary proposed in the scheme may be accepted*. We must, however, emphatically state that in order to draw the right type<sup>1</sup> of men and women to the profession it is necessary to offer suitable scales of salary with due regard to academic qualifications, and amount of training.

Let me, first of all, congratulate the teachers of this Union for their magnanimity in accepting the rather low salary, considering the limited financial resources

<sup>1</sup> The expressions 'the qualifications expected of teachers' and 'the right type', used in this passage, betray overlooking the real qualifications of the right type of teacher wanted for Wardha schools, which have been pointed out in Chapter V on 'Wardha School Teachers'.

of the Provincial Governments of this poor country, which, I am gratified to note, the teachers view with sympathy and consideration. As regards higher pay for teachers with higher academic qualifications (amount of training being the same for all teachers), the committee has already agreed that 'for teaching the higher classes of the school, it may be necessary to employ some teachers with higher academic qualifications, and for them somewhat higher pay may have to be provided'. This is exactly the view I have stressed when discussing this aspect in the earlier chapter on 'Wardha School Teachers'.

But a more serious criticism, arising out of a want of clearness on the details of the scheme is the supposed connexion between the teachers' salary and the proceeds from the sale of children's products. That such a connexion is not contemplated by the committee is made clear in the second *Report*, wherein it is stated: 'Teachers are to be paid directly from the State Treasury as at present, and are not to be dependent on the somewhat fluctuating income received from the sale of school products, which should be credited as income to the Treasury.' After this reassuring statement I am sure teachers will find no ground to complain of the system of paying their salaries.

11. *Teachers' Training.* One small point of criticism, too, may be considered here. Some complain that the three years' course of training is too long. To those who are accustomed to the one year's training for the L.T. or B.T. or B.Ed. courses, as well as to the two years' course for Secondary Training and Higher Elementary Training, the three years' course in the

Wardha Training School will indeed, appear too long. But we must consider the scope and nature of the 'training' proposed to be given. The selected candidates have not only to acquire an adequate and practical knowledge of a handicraft, but also the art of correlating various other subjects with the basic craft. Any one turning to the syllabus of the three years' course, will be convinced that three years are needed for an adequate training to fit him to be a teacher in a Wardha school, be he matriculate, intermediate or graduate.

12. *Lack of Teachers.* Some critics feel that it will be difficult to find an adequate number of teachers. Certainly, it is impossible to find them all today, and we do not want today all the teachers that will be needed when the whole country is honeycombed with Wardha schools. As I have pointed out earlier in the chapter on Teachers, we shall have to make a beginning with the present teachers who will have to be given an emergency course of training, and with men and women who will be voluntarily coming forward for this form of national service; and with the increasing number of Wardha schools, we shall get the new type of teacher in large numbers. It is gratifying to hear from so eminent an educationist as Dr C. R. Reddy that this is not an entirely hopeless expectation. In his memorandum on the Wardha Scheme, submitted to Gandhiji at his special request, Dr Reddy says:

I am aware of the miraculous manner in which, under the inspiration of Mahatmaji thousands of men and women volunteered for national service. So on this point I am not without hope that a voluntary agency subsisting on a minimum salary or even living on the generosity of the villagers may be forthcoming.

But the question is whether these high states of moral fervour could be regarded as permanent institutions instead of what they have always been, the great, but temporary, exaltations of individual or racial spirit, which must be utilized for developing institutions to a higher level.

There is a mixture of hope and doubt in this view. Let us appreciate his sense of hope, and, as regards his doubt, let us assure him and others of his way of thinking that it is the conviction of those of us who, like Mahatmaji, have great faith in the creation of a new age with a new national outlook through the Wardha system of education, that it is possible to produce a new generation imbued not only with an ascetic ideal of simplicity, but also with the higher ideals of service and sacrifice. Out of this generation, we shall obtain all the teachers that thousands of Wardha schools of the future will need.

#### IV. Omissions in the Scheme

13. *Pre-Wardha Education.* The scheme has also been criticized because it contemplates the child's education beginning at the age of seven, which is considered too late to put children to school. This is a very reasonable criticism. Indeed, the committee has recognized the importance of pre-Wardha education, and considers it as a very important period in the child's life. Though the committee also admits that that stage of education will have 'to be shaped in the rather unfavourable surroundings of poor village homes under the care of uneducated and indifferent parents mostly struggling against unbearable circumstances', it leaves the problem by simply pointing out 'the necessity for

some organization of pre-school education conducted or supported by the State, for children between the ages of three and seven'. This is undoubtedly the weakest point of the Wardha Scheme.

As I have already shown elsewhere, this important period too can be brought under the scheme by beginning the Wardha Scheme at the age of *five*, and not at seven, thus having 9 years of compulsory education between 5 and 14, instead of 7 years from 7 to 14. It is gratifying to note that the Kher Sub-Committee of the Central Board of Education has also recommended this change in the period of compulsion and thus revised the Wardha Scheme.

14. *Neglect of English.* From the propositions laid down by Gandhiji as well as from his writings it is clear that English, in his opinion, is to be eliminated from the Wardha Scheme of education—'minus English' is his motto. Some misunderstand him, thinking that a possible dislike of the English has led him to cut out English from the Wardha curriculum. Not at all. It is for two very cogent reasons that he has recommended the omission of English. He says:

My plan of primary education certainly comprises these things (physical drill, handicrafts, drawing and music) which easily become possible the moment you remove from the children's shoulders the burden of having to master a difficult foreign language.

So it is the necessity of having to find time for the handicraft and other subjects, as well as the difficulty of this foreign language—which every teacher will admit — that has driven Gandhiji to suggest this.

Indeed, it must be admitted that today parents want their children to learn English and also to be educated through the medium of English; but tomorrow, when the place of English has been taken by Hindustani as the *lingua franca* of the country and as the language of the Federal Government and of inter-provincial communication, parents themselves will welcome the removal from the shoulders of their children of the burden of studying this difficult foreign language and the introduction of the mother-tongue as the medium.

However, as English is a language of culture and of international communication, some little corner may be assigned to English so that children may have a working knowledge of this language too, and those who desire to proceed to higher education and learning may be given an intensive course in English language and literature during the post-Wardha or pre-university stage of education. When the curriculum of studies is finally worked out the Provincial Governments may be trusted to make suitable changes in the curriculum.<sup>1</sup>

15. *Neglect of Physical Education.* This is another point of criticism which deserves examination. Indeed, in the time-table only 10 minutes are provided for 'physical training', and this has misled the public into thinking that it will receive very little attention. The committee's explanation will answer this objection.

We have not given a separate and distinctive place to play in the scheme, because it is essentially an extra-curricular activity; if it is made a compulsory

<sup>1</sup> On this point see also the recommendation of the Kher Sub-Committee in the last chapter.

part of the syllabus, it loses its spontaneity and ceases to be play in the psychological sense. . . . It should, however, be borne in mind that, in an activity school, play is an integral part of its method and is not included as an escape from academic drudgery.

Nevertheless, provision is made in the curriculum for physical education. Both individual and group games are actually provided. For example, we read:

#### VI. Physical Training:

- (a) Playground games—non-equipment games common in the villages.
- (b) Imaginative and imitative games.
- (c) Rhythmical exercises.
- (d) Folk dances.

Moreover, so far as the *theoretical* aspect of physical education (which is neglected today) is concerned, the syllabus provides for the necessary knowledge of physiology, hygiene, and dietetics, through the general science courses, and 'as for *practical* training, the entire work of the school, involving craft-practice, games, gardening and active methods of learning (through an 'activity curriculum'), has been envisaged as an aid to the development of the child's health and physical vigour.

16. *Neglect of Religion.* Some have criticized the Wardha Scheme on the ground that no provision is made for instruction in religion. It is a great surprise to many that, in spite of the fact that Mahatmaji has himself repeatedly deplored the irreligiousness and indifference of many educated Indians today, he makes no provision in his scheme for religious education, which ought to be considered as much more important than

physical or intellectual education inasmuch as the immortal soul is more important than the mortal body. Mahatmaji even disappoints his admirers by thus answering this criticism:

Why did I not lay any stress on religious instruction? people ask. Because, I am teaching them practical religion, the religion of self-help.

We cannot believe that so spiritual a soul as the Mahatma considers self-help as enough religion for India's children. Shall we, after all that admirers have said of the spiritual East and sacred India, be content with the meagre religion of self-help? Self-help is, indeed, a necessary virtue, but it is only an elementary virtue, which will not take us very far on the road to God. Primary education, especially when it lasts seven or nine years and is the only education most children are to have in life, cannot do without a serious and systematic course of religious training.

Every one of us is fully aware of the difficulty of providing such training in a country of so many religions; but we have to bear in mind that no amount of difficulty can extinguish a sacred and primary duty. How then. Mahatmaji may ask, can Hindus and Mohammedans and Christians be provided with instruction in their own religions? Will this not perpetuate communal divisions? The answer is that religion and communalism are not the same thing; to destroy communalism it is not necessary to destroy religion. Indeed, even educated Indians need to be taught that religion ought not to affect purely political, social and economic life, and that a good and true religion must make them better men, more patriotic, more freedom-loving, more

self-sacrificing, less separatist and exclusive, far from what is connoted by the ugly word 'communalistic'.

It is, indeed, impossible in a country like India for the State to provide each child with education in his or her own religion. Then how are we to solve this knotty problem? This problem we have to approach with vision and sympathy, in a practical manner. The solution that alone would satisfy the people and requirements of the country in the circumstances in which it is placed, must take note of the general need as well as the need of children belonging to different religions. When we see before us the dangerous and unpleasant fruits of a system of godless education which the policy of British neutrality in religion has introduced into the country, we must endeavour to counteract the evil effects of godless education by introducing a system in which God takes His legitimate place as the author of the universe and the Creator and Lord of man.

How, then, shall we set about this difficult task? To every child instruction in moral science should be provided on a common theistic basis, so that the future citizens produced by the Wardha system may possess the moral virtues taught both by theory in Moral Instruction classes and by practice in living and working together as brethren or as sisters in a Wardha school. But moral virtues can sprout and thrive only in spiritual soil watered and manured by religious ideas and principles. It is the high spirituality of the East that has made the West turn to India for inspiration from her ancient philosophy; it is the high spirituality of Gandhiji that has made him the great Mahatma and the undoubted leader of modern India. If so, are we to leave religion out of account when reorientating our

system of education and giving to the country national education suited to the genius and traditions of her people?

Moreover, every parent and child has a right to religious education, and has also a duty to assert that right; and the State which undertakes to educate the child as the trustee of the parent has to provide for instruction in religion. How, then, shall we make provision for it in the scheme of Wardha education? Here is a plan which the learned editor of *The New Review* has placed before us in the article 'Light from Wardha', already referred to, and which I am sure, will appeal to all those who are anxious to provide for religious instruction (not merely moral instruction) in the new scheme of education.

Once a plan of primary education has been carefully laid down by the State, its carrying out should be left, *under reasonable supervision*, to private initiative. Let zealous and stable private bodies be invited and encouraged to undertake the running of rural schools, on condition that they follow that syllabus, with full freedom to teach children their religion within or outside of school hours. As I have suggested in an article on 'Primary Education in Bengal'<sup>1</sup> children should not be forced to attend instruction in other religions than their own.

And the possible objection that thereby communalism and separatism will be fostered, the editor answers by saying:

But it will not foster communalism and separatism if the children are taught by *the right kind of teachers* and the schools are *supervised by the right kind of*

<sup>1</sup> *The New Review*, June 1937.

*inspectors.* Other activities can be shared by pupils belonging to different religions: manual work, games, singing, science, arithmetic. They will thus grow up into the idea, so necessary if India is to attain national unity, that one may be a Hindu, a Moham-medan, a Parsi, or a Christian, and yet be a good Indian.

In a country like India with its various religions and communities, this is the only solution we can think of to inculcate spirituality and at the same time to promote national unity—the two aims which cannot be ignored in a system of national education. This is the only way of reconciling communalism with nationalism. If we ignore religion, we shall lose that fundamental feature of spirituality for which India has been admired and we shall continue to suffer from the materialistic outlook on life, which is the bane of the so-called civilized nations of today and which India is suffering from owing to her existing system of godless education. Instead of divorcing religion from education, let us give it its legitimate place in the formation of youth so that a new generation fostered by the Wardha system of education may grow up with a spiritual as well as a national outlook—which shall be the glory of India and a model for other nations to imitate.

## **V. Other points of Criticism**

17. *Number of School Days.* The committee says that 'the school is expected to work for 288 days in a year, an average of 24 days in a month'. This is considered by many as expecting too much. It is mathematically accurate— $12 \times 24 = 288$ ; but is it practically possible? Can we expect the school to work uniformly

all the twelve months of the year? Even Sri Mushruwala, with all his enthusiasm for the Wardha Scheme, thinks of an academic year of only *nine* months (i.e..  $24 \times 9 = 216$  days), when he says: 'Reckoning on an average three hours of work per day for about *nine months* in the year. . . .' And what do teachers think on this point? The *Report* of the South Indian Teachers' Union says: 'We recommend that 220 working days for the school year may be fixed as the minimum.' This, I should think, is a very reasonable suggestion. To work 288 days is not practicable. The committee fixed 288 days, because they were obsessed with the idea of self-supporting education and they saw they could realize it only if schools worked for 288 days in the year. The Hon Dr Subbarayan, Minister for Education, Madras, who as an Education Minister over a long period has a true insight into the educational conditions of the country, wisely observed at the conference: 'The country would be thankful to Mahatmaji even if education could be half self-supporting.' This is the correct position. In order to make education fully self-supporting, let us not make the children and the teachers of the Wardha schools work as many as 288 days, thereby depriving them of all holidays and vacations. In a land of religions and religious festivities, of agriculture and its seasons of sowing, weeding and harvesting, it is really impossible to get 288 days of work. Let us not attempt the impossible. We may well agree with the teachers and expect only a *minimum* of 220 days, if not a *maximum* of 220.

18. *Migration from Villages to Towns.* Some critics see in this scheme an attempt to prevent

migration of boys from the village to the town. One critic puts it in this form:

If, in a certain school in a rural area agriculture was taken as the basic craft what would happen to those of its students who wished to migrate to towns? Was it the intention of the scheme that people in rural areas should for ever be prevented from migrating to towns? That would be an intolerable restriction. The depopulation of rural areas was to be deplored, but unless the root causes of the migration into towns are tackled you will not succeed in putting a stop to such migration.

Every one of the statements in the above passage deserves to be examined. First, if a boy whose basic craft is agriculture, has to migrate to a town for special reasons, he could still continue his career as an agriculturist in that town. Are there not agriculturists even in towns, cultivating the fields in the suburbs? Secondly, as to the question whether the scheme prevents migration from villages to towns, we may answer it in the negative. Generally those educated in village Wardha schools will prefer to remain and work in the villages for the regeneration of village life; but there is nothing to prevent them from migrating to towns in search of careers for which they have received training. Thirdly, we are told that the depopulation of rural areas was to be deplored and that we must tackle the root causes of migration. If anybody thinks that the Wardha Scheme does not tackle the root causes of migration from the village to the town, he has not understood the basic principles and aims of the new scheme. It is not because of the attractions offered by town life—by cinemas and coffee hotels and barbers' saloons—that

villagers migrate to towns, but because the village life of today is so impoverished that villagers must migrate to towns with their factories and workshops to earn their bread. The scheme—with its aversion to machinery and a Machine Age, and with its welcome plan for the revival of village industries—will not necessitate the migration, because the revived village economic life will enable villagers to earn their livelihood in the village itself and the new social amenities that will grow up in the villages of the future will make village life sufficiently attractive.

19. *Check on Industrial Progress.* Another point of criticism is that the Wardha Scheme is not only a 'back-to-the village' scheme but a 'back-to-primitive-life' scheme. I am afraid there is a misunderstanding if people think that the scheme is opposed to all industrial progress. Indeed, the scheme is opposed to the machine-age civilization which exploits the weak and the poor and makes them the slaves of machines; but it is not opposed to industrial progress. The committee has made this point clear in the second *Report*.

May I ask the critics whether the Wardha Scheme of education through crafts and productive work, through a thorough training in the use of the hand and the eye and in practical skill and observation and manual work, or the present system of literary and bookish education based on the use of textbooks and notebooks, is a better preparation for later industrial training in Textile Institutes, Schools of Art and Schools of Technology? If our country is to start on a new career of industrial development, we must give up or radically change the present notoriously bookish

and literary education and introduce the proposed Wardha system of practical education. Instead of only a liberal education or only a technical education, let us combine, in due proportion and in an intelligent manner, both cultural and practical education as provided in the Wardha Scheme so that we may produce educated weavers, educated carpenters, educated smiths and educated agriculturists.

Even Gandhiji visualizes a time when we shall produce, through the Wardha Scheme, our own industrial pioneers and inventors, our own Cromptons and Hargreaves. Let us have a vision of the future through the following striking and inspiring passage:

We are apt to think lightly of the village crafts because we have divorced education from manual training. Manual work has been regarded as something inferior, and owing to the wretched distortion of the *Varna* we come to regard spinners and weavers and carpenters and shoe-makers as belonging to the inferior castes, the proletariat. We have had no Cromptons and Hargreaves because of this vicious system of considering the crafts as something inferior, divorced from the skilled. If they had been regarded as callings having an independent status of their own equal to the status that learning enjoyed, we should have had great inventors from among our craftsmen. . . . We will by concentrating on the villages see that the inventive skill, that an intensive learning of the craft, will stimulate, will subserve the needs of the villagers as a whole. (The *Harijan*, September 18, 1937.)

I have no doubt in my mind when I say that through this craft-centred system of education lies the path that

will lead to the economic salvation of our people and will revive the ancient industrial glory of our land.

20. *Gandhiji is thrusting the scheme on the country.* We shall close the chapter with one more criticism which amounts to a charge against the followers and admirers of the Gandhian way. Indeed, the Congress Governments mean to introduce the scheme in their respective provinces though perhaps with certain changes in non-essentials suitable to the varying circumstances of different areas. But this is not because the scheme has emanated from the fertile intellect of Mahatmaji. No doubt this fact has gained for the scheme that attention and importance which it otherwise might not have secured. It is out of the conviction that the scheme is good for the country as a system of sound national education, worthy to be introduced on a nation-wide scale, that the Congress Governments intend to introduce it slowly but steadily in the Congress Provinces.

Let me disabuse the minds of critics who think that Gandhiji is thrusting it upon an unwilling people. There are various passages in his writings and speeches that go to show that he does not want the scheme to be tried because *he* has advocated it. Here are some of the passages:

(i) I approach the task in confidence but in all humility *with an open mind* and with the will to learn and to revise and correct my views whenever necessary. (The *Harijan*, October 2, 1937.)

(ii) *I am open to free and frank criticism* so that I might clarify some misunderstandings in connexion with my scheme. I have placed the scheme before

the Ministers; it is for them *to accept it or to reject it*. (Inaugural Address at the conference.)

(iii) You should not accept anything out of your regard for me. I am near death's door and *would not dream of thrusting anything down people's throats*. The scheme should be accepted after full and mature consideration so that it may not have to be given up after a little while. (Concluding speech on the first day of the Conference.)

(iv) I would earnestly request any one who does not agree with my proposal to tell me so frankly. *I do not want to impose my opinions on anybody*. (Opening speech on the second day.)

(v) There is nothing final about the Conference, as it is a conference of seekers, and every one is here to offer suggestions and criticisms. *I have never the idea of carrying through anything by storm*. (Closing speech on the second day.)

There is no foundation, therefore, for the criticism that Gandhiji is thrusting it upon unwilling people. In fact as pointed out in the first chapter, in connexion with the Wardha Conference, those who attended the Conference, particularly the Education Ministers, with due respect to Gandhiji's opinions, 'spoke out their doubts and difficulties as frankly as one could expect on such an occasion'. And the fact that today the Congress Ministers are entering the thick forest bare-footed, slowly clearing the thorns and the bushes and cutting a new road to pass through, shows unmistakably their desire not to take a wrong step or to make a leap in the dark. There is wisdom in their slow and cautious but firm and steady march towards the goal of the Wardha Scheme of nation-wide education on national lines.

## CHAPTER VIII

# THE WARDHA SYLLABUS

IN this chapter it is not proposed to give the syllabuses for all subjects which the Zakir Husain committee worked out for the Wardha system of education. What is here aimed at is only to illustrate, by means of suitable extracts from the syllabuses, some of the special features of this new system of education and method of teaching, which may not otherwise be intelligible to the public, nor easily grasped by ordinary teachers.

### I. The Basic Craft

The craft or productive work chosen should be rich in educative possibilities. It should find natural points of correlation with important human activities and interests, and should extend into the whole content of the school curriculum. The object of this new system of education being not primarily the production of craftsmen able to practise some craft mechanically, but rather the 'exploitation for educative purposes of the resources implicit in craftwork', the committee has recommended three suitable basic crafts:—(1) agriculture; (2) spinning and weaving; and (3) cardboard-work, woodwork and metal-work. Intellectual training *through* a craft is by a process of *correlation*, which the ordinary teacher, much less the lay man, is not able to understand. How this is done by correlating various subjects with the basic craft chosen is what is illustrated by the following extracts from the syllabuses.

Another feature worth noting is the co-ordination of the various subjects and adjusting the study of the child intelligently and actively to his environment. With this object in view the committee has chosen three centres, intrinsically inter-connected, as the foci for the curriculum, i.e., the child's physical environment, his social environment, and craftwork (which is their natural meeting-point since it utilizes the resources of the former for the purposes of the latter).

One other point the reader may note as he proceeds with a perusal of the syllabus. In answer to the criticism that the Wardha school time-table was an unbalanced one, since it allotted 3 hours and 20 minutes every day to craftwork, it was pointed out (p. 97 *ante*) that 3 hours and 20 minutes are not devoted to the mere mechanical practice of the craft—which, of course, would be tiresome and unreasonable—but include both practical and theoretical instruction. The following extracts illustrate this important point, which has not been clearly grasped by some critics.

## PROCESS OF CORRELATION BETWEEN BASIC CRAFT AND OTHER SUBJECTS

### GRADE I<sup>1</sup>

#### *Mathematics*

Counting the number of rounds while winding the yarn on to the winder; counting the slivers given out for spinning; the number of accessories of spinning, such as taklis, winders.

An idea of the decimal system by counting the fingers of the hand, by arranging objects in groups of ten,

<sup>1</sup> 'Grade' means class or standard.

e.g., taklis, winders, hanks of yarn; by forming boys for drill in lines of ten each; and by giving out slivers for spinning in bundles of ten.

Addition tables can be constructed by keeping scores at spinning competitions, by counting different objects and arranging them in heaps.

Subtraction tables can be constructed by counting the slivers given out for spinning and those left over after spinning is finished.

Measuring thread and weighing slivers given out for spinning will enable children to arrive at mathematical results, e.g., units of measure; lines, curved and straight.

*N.B.*—Counting and writing of numbers up to 160 is needed in spinning and winding as 160 rounds make a lati, 16 rounds a kali and 1 round of 4 ft. is a tar.

### *Social Studies*

Clothing of primitive man:—use of leaves, barks and skins, leading gradually to the use of wool, cotton and silk.

Dress of men in different lands:—the Arab, the Eskimo, the African pigmy. Dress in cold and warm countries. Cleanliness of clothes.

### *General Science*

Names and functions of different parts of the cotton plant: changes in the clothing of man with the change of seasons. How does clothing protect against cold and heat? Effect of humidity on carding and spinning. Morning time for the picking of cotton. Germination of the cotton seed.

***Drawing***

Drawing of the cotton plant, cotton flower, cotton pod.

***Mother-Tongue***

Naming the various tools used in the craft, describing the various processes of picking, carding and spinning with the takli; harvest songs and folk songs connected with spinning.

**GRADE II*****Mathematics***

Acquaintance with bigger numbers in spinning and winding exercises: as, 640 rounds make a goondi.

Addition and subtraction tables by practical work in spinning and winding, by counting exercises in preparation of slivers and thread. Easy problems in addition and subtraction from practical work in spinning and winding.

Exercises in measuring and weighing in connexion with the basic craft to be continued in order to introduce children to measures of length, weight and money, commonly used in the locality.

Multiplication tables to be constructed by students when counting in groups of ten, five and two.

***Social Studies***

Dress of primitive man in modern times.

Dress in ancient times.

Dress in distant lands.

Clothing of different classes of people in the village (too little, too much: swadeshi, foreign), style of dress.

### *General Science*

Form and size of the cotton plant; stem and bark of the cotton plant; form of the leaf of the cotton plant; form, size and colour of flower of the cotton plant; the seed of the cotton plant; time of sowing and harvesting and the period of germination. Cotton plug to prevent dust getting in.

### *Drawing*

Drawing the cotton plant, the cotton flower.

### *Mother-Tongue*

Oral description of processes involved in craftwork. Reading matter to be provided should contain lessons on items mentioned above under Social Studies and General Science.

Writing of the names (nouns) of instruments used in craft and the processes (verbs) involved: writing short sentences about them.

## GRADE III

### *Mathematics*

Numeration and notation in connexion with:

(i) Statistics of the produce of cotton in the village, district, province and country, and figures of exports of cotton and of imports and exports of cotton cloth.

(ii) Population of the village, the district, the province and India, engaged in the basic craft.

(iii) The areas under cultivation: of cotton, wheat, etc.

(These will supply data for problems and exercises in addition and subtraction with bigger numbers.)

Multiplication and division, as the shortest way of performing addition and subtraction of equal numbers, to be taught by distributing and by taking back slivers, taklis, winders and bundles of cotton; by calculating numbers of objects required for distribution and the numbers received from a heap by individual students.

Tables of weights and measures to be studied through actual exercises in weighing and measuring during the course of craftwork.

A study of the charkha to gain familiarity with common solids, i.e., cylinder, cone, sphere, etc.

The meanings of a quarter, a half and three-quarters to be explained to children practically, by separating heaps of cotton, or of cotton seeds.

Exercises in reduction (ascending and descending) can be taught by practical work in calculating wages for spinning per child per class and per length of yarn spun per class.

### *Social Studies*

1. Dress in Buddhist India (dress of Bhikhus), ancient Persia and ancient Greece. Beauty and simplicity of dress in ancient times.

2. Description and significance of dress—dress for work, leisure and sleep.

3. Production of cloth in the village—approximate consumption per head—quantity produced in the village and imported from outside.

### *General Science*

Experiments with cotton plants to illustrate germination of the cotton seed.

Dispersal of cotton seed.

Dependence of man on cotton plant.

How to keep clothes clean—washing with various materials available in the village.

### *Drawing*

Drawing of dresses of primitive people.

### *Mother-Tongue*

Oral description and discussion of craft processes; silent reading of written instructions about the craft work.

Relevant reading material in a text.

Keeping a daily record of work done in craft.

## GRADE IV

### *Mathematics*

The bigger numbers to be taken from figures of the occupational census and from statistics of production, exports and imports, etc.

Calculation of wages earned in craftwork will introduce children to compound multiplication.

Simple book-keeping in connexion with work in basic craft; keeping an account of materials used, and goods sold.

### *Social Studies*

Indian trade in cloth in olden times.

More detailed information about production and consumption of cloth in the village and in the district.

Centres of cloth-production in the district.

The part played by cloth trade in Indian history; importance of trade routes from India to the West; the urge to find a sea-route.

The number of producers of cloth in the village, in the district; number necessary to produce all the cloth required; variations of this number with the variations in the methods of production; textile mills; the migration from village to town:—its extent; its dangers; need for planning.

### *General Science*

Experiment with cotton plant.

Experiment with cotton to show that air occupies the space between the fibres; carded cotton, increased volume of air in the intervening space (air, non-conductor of heat); lihaf and razai.

### *Drawing*

Posters and charts to represent graphically information relating to crafts under Social Studies.

### *Mother-Tongue*

Oral presentation and discussion of relevant information under Social Studies given above. Relevant reading material in the textbook and in books for supplementary reading.

Writing about relevant facts under Social Studies; descriptions of processes in craft and experiments in General Science; writing simple letters to elicit information from the A.-I.S.A., A.-I.V.I.A., the district council or village panchayat.

Keeping a daily or monthly record of individual and class progress in the basic craft.

## GRADE V

*Mathematics*

Practical problems in the calculation of wages, quantities of yarn spun, and yearly produce and expenses.

Practice method of calculation with reference to prices of yarn, cloth, and wages.

Book-keeping to be continued by keeping detailed accounts of work in the basic craft and of the school co-operative shop.

*Social Studies*

The simple dress of the Prophet of Islam; how cloth was produced in Arabia at that time.

Indo-Muslim dress; improvement in cloth-production; weaving, dyeing and printing; carpet-making. Chief centres of cloth trade with a study of their climatic and geographical conditions; State protection and patronage; the land- and sea-routes of cloth trade; flourishing trade with the West; privately-owned and State factories.

The study of the different regions of the world with reference to the production of cloth, cotton and wool areas.

Possibilities of organizing sale of khadi on a co-operative basis; the organization of its production and sale in the district; importance of khadi in the present economic life of India.

*General Science*

Study of cotton plant in greater detail.

### ***Drawing***

Drawing of illustrations for relevant information under Social Studies and General Science, given above.

Careful study of cotton leaf and pod in general:—in pencil, ink and colour.

### ***Mother-Tongue and Hindustani***

A good deal of relevant reading matter can be provided in the textbook and in books for supplementary reading.

Letters to different organizations to elicit information about khadi production and sales, about possibilities of co-operative organization.

The keeping of necessary records of craftwork.

Hindustani names of instruments and processes involved in the craft.

## **GRADE VI**

### ***Mathematics***

Work in the school shop as an introduction to problems of profit and loss.

Percentages of waste in craftwork.

Calculations of the volume of wood required for making charkhas, etc. Volumes of cubes, cuboids and cylinders. Calculation of areas.

The cost of cloth required for dhurries; cost of making dresses.

### ***Social Studies***

The importance of cotton to the West; the whole story of the British occupation of India.

The causes of the origin of the East Indies trade;

first trade concessions; relation of European companies and the workers; the East India Company and the Indian merchants; the exploitation of the Indian peasant, worker and trader; the Industrial Revolution; competition with Indian trade; protection in England against Indian textiles.

The story of the Indian national movement; the swadeshi movement, swadeshi under Gandhiji; charkha and khadi as symbols of Indian freedom; the economics of khadi.

Organizing centres of craft training for the adult population of the village.

Different kinds of cotton and its geographical distribution in the world; map work and collection of specimens of different kinds of cotton; climatic conditions favourable to the growth of cotton, e.g., soil, humidity, temperature; the idea of geographic control; import and export figures relating to Indian cotton; cotton exports and imports from and to different cotton-manufacturing and cloth-producing countries of the world.

The scramble for markets and raw materials; correlation with current events, e.g., the conquest of Abyssinia, Manchuria, China.

### *General Science*

Physical properties of water; its chemical composition and the mechanical devices for irrigation may be studied in connexion with the geography of cotton; study of physical properties of water with reference to cotton; insect pests; study of useful and harmful insects.

### *Drawing*

Posters for a campaign to popularize the use of khadi; scale drawing in relation to craftwork.

***Mother-Tongue and Hindustani***

A good deal of very instructive and interesting reading material can be provided in the textbook and the books for supplementary reading dealing with topics mentioned above under Social Studies and General Science. Composition work should also be closely correlated with the interests generated in connexion with children's craft and other work.

**GRADE VII*****Mathematics***

The children should learn to understand the rates of interest charged and the method of calculating interest. Running of school Savings Bank will make the need of these calculations more important. Practical problems in time, speed and work with reference to the basic craft.

Graphs in connexion with the progress made by students in craftwork and in other school subjects. Square root calculations in the making of cloth. The mutual relation of warp, weft, poonja and hank.

***Social Studies***

The effect of the Industrial Revolution on the textile industry.

Effect of scientific and technical developments on clothing.

The story of industrialism and imperial expansion as illustrated by the scramble for cotton-growing areas and markets for textiles.

The World War.

Development of cotton areas. World production of

cotton, cloth imports and exports. Different methods of producing cotton; individual and collective farming (land tenure systems). Cotton growing in Egypt and the U.S.A. with reference to areas in the south; its association with slavery. The Civil War.

History of the technique of weaving in India and other countries.

### *General Science*

Bleaching, dyeing and printing of cloth. Relevant portions about mechanical appliances with reference to the development of spinning and weaving technique.

### *Drawing*

Drawings and sections of objects to be made in the craft class.

### *Mother-Tongue and Hindustani*

As in Grade VI.

## **II. Advancement of Culture**

One important point of criticism levelled at the Wardha Scheme is that it neglects culture for the sake of crafts (see p. 93). On the contrary, examining how far under the Wardha system a pupil can attain the matriculation standard of knowledge and formation, I have stated (on p. 56) that 'barring the knowledge of English in the present matriculation course, a boy who emerges from a complete Wardha school will have a standard of knowledge and formation which is decidedly higher than that of a modern matriculate or secondary school leaving certificate holder'. To

substantiate this contention the following extracts are given, which should convince any unprejudiced reader that what the Wardha school gives is not a mere elementary or even a higher elementary course, but that it works up to a higher standard than the present matriculation; and that culture and knowledge, instead of being sacrificed to craftwork, are adequately safeguarded and advanced.

The following syllabuses also help us to understand how the studies of the child are correlated with his social and physical environments. The curriculum of the Wardha school aims at a system of practical education, and is, therefore, a decided improvement upon the present system which is not related to the life and environment of the child.

## SYLLABUS IN SOCIAL STUDIES

### GRADE I

#### I. *The Story of Primitive Man*

How he satisfied his wants and developed the rudiments of civilized life.

(a) His shelter (caves, trees, lake-dwellings, etc.).

(b) His clothing or natural protection:—use of leaves, barks and skins, etc., leading gradually to wool, cotton and silk.

(c) His means of livelihood:—hunting, pastoral life and primitive agriculture.

(d) His weapons and tools:—wood, stone, bronze and iron.

(e) His means of self-expression:—speech, primitive writing and drawing.

(f) His companions and help-mates:—the horse, cow, dog, etc.

*N.B.*—This account of the life of primitive man should be given in the form of stories likely to appeal to the children's imagination.

## II. *Life of man in ancient times*

Ancient Egypt, ancient China and ancient India, to be given in the form of stories, e.g.,

(a) The story of a common slave building the pyramids of Egypt.

(b) The story of the first five Chinese emperors.

(c) The story of a boy in Mahenjo Daro.

(d) The story of Shunah Shepa (Vedic period).

## III. *Life of man in distant lands*

Arab Bedouins, Eskimos, African Pygmies, Red Indians.

*N.B.*—Much of the work can be done orally in the time allotted to the mother-tongue, in the form of stories and dramatization.

## IV. *Training for civic life*

### (1) *Life of the child in the school*

Civic training will be imparted by practical training aiming at the development of the following attitudes and habits:—

#### (a) *Cleanliness and sanitation*

(i) Personal cleanliness (refer to the syllabus in General Science).

(ii) Cleanliness of clothes.

(iii) Proper use of latrines and urinals.

(iv) Proper use of waste-paper baskets and dustbins.

- (v) Keeping the classroom and the school cupboards clean.
- (vi) Care and proper use of the school drinking water.
- (b) *Social responsibilities*
  - (i) Proper greeting of teachers and schoolfellows.
  - (ii) Using of clean language.
  - (iii) Asking and answering questions politely.
  - (iv) Waiting for turn in speaking.
  - (v) Making use of the queue system.
- (c) *Craftwork*
  - (i) Proper use of work materials and equipment.
  - (ii) Sharing materials and equipment with others.
  - (iii) Working in groups.
  - (iv) Waiting for one's turn.
  - (v) Leaving the classroom clean and replacing the material and equipment in proper order after work.
- (d) *Games*
  - (i) Fair play (to refrain from cheating and deceiving).
  - (ii) To refrain from taking advantage of the weak.
  - (iii) Importance of truthfulness above all gain or victory.

(e) *Discharge of responsibilities*

Besides the above-mentioned practical training every child should have some definite responsibility in the school life, either individually or as member of a group. The following responsibilities are suggested for groups of children, between seven and nine years of age:—

- (i) Cleanliness of classroom.
- (ii) Cleanliness of the school compound.

- (iii) Care of the school drinking water.
- (iv) Collection of leaves, flowers, stones, feathers, bark, wood, etc., for the school museum.
- (v) Helping to decorate the school for festivals, etc.
- (vi) Entertaining the school and the village.
- (vii) Helping new students.
- (2) *Life of the child in his home*
  - (a) The home as an ordered community, and the part played by every member in this unit.
    - (i) The place of father and mother in the home.
    - (ii) The place of brothers, sisters and cousins in the home.
    - (iii) The place of other relations in the home.
    - (iv) The place of servants in the home.
  - (b) The child's place in the family and his responsibilities towards its older and younger members.
  - (c) The proper discharge of particular duties assigned to him in the home.

## V. *Physical training*

- (a) Playground games, non-equipment games common in the villages.
- (b) Imaginative and imitative games.
- (c) Rhythmical exercises.
- (d) Folk dances.

## GRADE II

### I. *Primitive life in modern times*

African aborigines, Australian bushmen, Ceylon Veddas, Indian aborigines.

## II. *Life of man in ancient times*

Ancient Hebrews, ancient Romans, ancient Indians (the period of the Upanishads). To be given in the form of stories, e.g., the story of Moses, the story of Abraham, the story of Marcus Aurelius and of Regulus the Roman and the story of Nachiketa and Gargi.

## III. *Life of man in distant lands*

The life of an Afridi boy, the life of a boy in Tibet, the life of a boy in a Swiss village, the life of a boy in Persia and the life of a boy in Japan.

*N.B.*—Much of the work under headings I, II, and III should be included with the work in the mother-tongue in the form of stories, reading material and dramatization.

## IV. *Training for civic life*

Observation of life in the village:—food, clothing, housing, occupations, water-supply, the village bazaar, places of worship, village entertainments, fairs and festivals.

## V. *Practical*

Practical civic training under the following heads:—

(a) The child in his school.

(b) The child in his home.

Under these two heads there will be a continuation of the work outlined in the syllabus of Grade I.

## VI. *The child and his village*

(a) Keeping the immediate neighbourhood of the home clean.

(b) Keeping the village roads clean; if possible the children should put up simple dust-bins in different parts of the village and persuade their families and friends to use them.

(c) Refraining from dirtying the village well.

(d) Entertaining the village by participating in simple school celebrations.

(e) Kindness to animals.

## VII. *Physical training*

As outlined in Grade I.

## GRADE III

### I. *Life of man in ancient times*

Ancient India (Buddhist period), ancient Persia, ancient Greece. To be given in the form of stories. For example:

*Buddhist India.* The story of Buddha, the story of Ashoka, the story of Mahendra and Sanghamitra, the story of a Buddhist missionary to Central Asia or China and the story of a student of Nalanda.

*Ancient Persia.* The story of Kava, the blacksmith, the story of the battle of Thermopylae and the story of an Indian physician at the court of Darius the Great.

*Ancient Greece.* The story of a Greek slave, the story of Socrates, the story of a young man taking part in the Olympic games, the story of Alexander, the story of Megasthenes and the story of Pheidippides (Marathon race).

### II. *Life of man in distant lands*

The story of a boy in New York, the story of a boy in China, the story of a boy in a Russian kolhoz or

collective farm and the story of a boy on an Indian tea plantation.

*N.B.*—Much of the work under headings I and II will be included with the work in the mother-tongue in the form of stories, reading material and dramatization.

### *III. Story of the district including a guided tour of the district if possible, with reference to*

Relief, general features, climate, crops, industries, local historic monuments, means of communication and places of worship.

*N.B.*—During this tour, the work should be elementary and general. It should be carried further and made more precise during the industrial survey of the district to be carried out during the fourth year.

#### *Practical work*

(a) Important features to be filled in an outline map of the district.

(b) Making plans of the classroom, the school building and the school compound.

### *IV. Study of the Globe*

Shape of the earth, land and water spheres and principal sea-routes (to be studied on a slate globe).

### *V. A study of the village community*

(a) The village and its administration. The village officers. The village panchayat; its functions.

(b) Village amenities:—market, dispensary, post-office, cattle-pound, roads, playgrounds and nearest railway station.

## VI. *Practical work*

(a) Organization of a school panchayat on the lines of the village panchayat.

(b) Organization of social service groups (boys and girls between the ages of 9 and 12) for the following civic activities:—

- (i) Protection and cleanliness of streets and wells.
- (ii) Protection of crops from destructive animals.
- (iii) Organization of games and amusement for children under 9.
- (iv) Organization of entertainments for the children and adult population of the village.
- (v) Participation in national and seasonal festivals.
- (vi) Preparation of posters, signs, etc.
- (vii) Volunteer work in village fairs, festivals, etc.

## GRADE IV

### I. *Life of man in ancient times*

Ancient India, Buddhist China, Greater India, Early Christians.

(a) *Ancient India*.—The stories of Samudragupta, Kalidas, Aryabhatta, an Arab merchant trading in India, an Indian trader carrying his merchandise to foreign countries, Harshavardhana and Prithiraj, an Indian physician at Harun ar Rashid's court.

(b) *Buddhist China*.—The story of the Chinese pilgrims, Fa-hien and Hiuén Tsang.

(c) *Greater India*.—The story of an Indian merchant or an artist sailing to Java or Siam and settling down there for his work.

(d) *The story of Christ and the early Christians*.—Syrian Christians.

## II. *Study of man's geographical environments*

### (1) An industrial survey of the district.

#### *Practical work*

(i) Preparation of a map of the industries of the district.

(ii) Preparation of a 'guide book' as a co-operative effort.

(2) Geography of the province with reference to its natural divisions, climate, agriculture, industries and communications.

(3) Distribution of hunting, fishing and forest occupations in the world.

#### *Practical work*

A relief map of the province in clay or sand, as a co-operative effort; making of maps, charts, plans and diagrams.

(4) The story of the explorations of the world:—Marco Polo, Vasco da Gama and Columbus.

(5) The various methods of ginning and carding used at different times and in different countries.

## III. *Training for civic life*

(1) A study of the town as an organized community, with reference to the following points:—

(a) Relation to the village:—their mutual inter-dependence; migration from village to town.

(b) The administration of the town:—municipality, rights and duties of citizens, taxes, police, law courts.

(c) Social service:—hospitals, child-welfare centres, libraries and reading rooms, post offices, water-works, street lighting, playgrounds, akhadas.

(d) Places of worship:—respect for all places of worship.

(e) Amusements and entertainments:—theatres and cinemas.

(f) Centres of education:—universities, colleges and schools, industrial schools.

*Practical work*

A guided trip to the nearest town if possible.

(2) Study of current events through the daily reading of newspapers in reading circles, correlated with map study in geography and with work in the mother-tongue.

*Practical work*

(a) Organization of self-governing units in the school on the principles of local self-government.

(b) Organization of school service groups with activities outlined in the syllabus for Grade III.

(c) Celebration of national, religious or seasonal festivals.

(d) Organization of newspaper-reading circles and discussion groups on current subjects.

(3) *Civic activities.* Continuation of work outlined for Grade III.

## SYLLABUS IN GENERAL SCIENCE

### GRADE I

(1) Naming and recognition of principal crops, trees, animals and birds in the neighbourhood.

(2) Direction-finding with reference to the sun; the seasons of the year; observation of changes due to changes of seasons, effect on trees, plants, birds, insects, reptiles and man.

(a) The colour of trees at different times of the year; the falling of leaves; chief parts of a plant; recognizing the difference between a leaf, a root and a stem; bulbs as storehouse of future nourishment; potatoes, onions.

(b) Insects fewer in winter than in spring and rain. Snakes during the rainy season. Where do they go in winter?

(c) Change in the clothing of man; how does clothing protect against cold?

(3) We are surrounded by air, at all times; air is a real substance; man breathes and lives in air; the air is in motion in the winds and in the school-room.

(4) Sources of water (river, spring, tank, well); circulation of water; evaporation, sun, clouds, dew and rain; observations of loss of water through evaporation.

(5) Fire must have air to burn; be careful with fire; don't run if clothing catches fire.

(6) Developing habits of cleanliness; cleaning of the body; cleaning of the face, hands, nails and teeth; use of the *dattoon*; cleaning of clothes, washing with various materials available in the villages.

**N.B.**—Insist on observation by the pupils. Organize frequent excursions. Prepare pupils beforehand for possible observations.

(7) Stories of how from the earliest time all the world over, man has been observing the sun, the moon and the stars and utilizing this knowledge for counting time and finding out direction.

Stories about farmers, travellers, sailors and generals of armies; how they have profited by a knowledge of astronomy.

The rising and setting of the sun and moon. The child is to be encouraged to observe that the same stars that set in the morning are to be seen to rise a little after sunset in the evening.

Phases of the moon. The bright and the dark half of the month. What they actually mean.

Observation of the exact points of sunrise and sunset and the rays of light as they fall from the window on the wall opposite; the winter solstice and the summer solstice (22 December and 22 June).

Finding the north by observing the Pole Star and the Great Bear.

Observation of the eclipses of the sun and moon if there are any during the year.

### (8) *Physical Education*

*Posture drills* (a) Sitting—secure good posture. (b) Standing—secure good posture. Ease of movement when rising. Drill in quietness and ease of movement. (c) Breathing—head up, chest out, inhale, exhale through the nose. (d) Dismissal—plan by which to save unnecessary waste of time, e.g., give commands: rise, stand, march, all march in single file.

## GRADE II

(1) Recognition of—(i) general form and size. (ii) general form of the stem and bark, (iii) general form of the leaf, (iv) general form, size and colour of the flower, and (v) general form and size of the fruit and seed, of at least five common trees of the neighbourhood.

(2) Recognition as in (i) to (v) above of at least

ten vegetables and crops grown in the neighbourhood; knowledge of the time of sowing and harvesting and the period of germination.

(3) General appearance, mode of locomotion, food and the call or cry of at least four domestic and three wild animals of the neighbourhood. Pond life; the frog and the fish; how they breathe; from the tadpole to the frog.

(4) Birds: general form, size, colour, mode of flight, nesting and feeding; breeding season, size, form and colour of eggs of at least five birds usually found in the neighbourhood; making a bird-bath and bird-table in the school yard.

(5) Observation that there is dust in the air; haze due to dust on a summer day; a dust-storm; beam of sunlight in a semi-darkened room; diseases caused by dust; how to minimize dangers due to dust.

(6) Water: its importance to plant, animal and human life; pure and impure water; common infections carried by water; the village well.

**N.B.**—In (1) to (6) insist on direct observation. Direct the pupil's attention to what he has to observe.

(7) Practical directions as regards breathing through the nose; value of fresh air; healthy habits of sleep.

(8) The day, the month and the year are not arbitrary units but they depend on natural astronomical phenomena.

The day caused by the earth's rotation round its axis. Division of a day into 24 hours or 60 ghatis, the latter being a more natural unit.

The month caused by the moon's circling round the earth from full moon to full moon or from new moon

to new moon; the month being made up of nearly thirty days.

The seasons: winter, spring, summer, rains, autumn.

Eclipses of the sun and the moon. What causes them.

(9) Physical Education:—as in Grade I.

### GRADE III

(1) Plants require food, water and sunlight. Comparative produce of equal plots with different manure, water and light provision. Water dissolves substances; food of plants in solution. Function of roots, stems; leaves, flowers and seeds.

(2) Seeds and germination; at least three seeds, one from each of the following groups: (a) maize, wheat, barley, (b) pea, cotton, pulses, (c) neem and castor, to show the difference between dicot and monocot seeds and that between hypogeal and epigeal cotyledons. How seeds are scattered: by wind, by animals, by force from the fruit, by water.

(3) At least three domestic animals in more detail; the cow, the cat, the dog, how they care for their young. Inter-dependence in nature; animals dependent on plants, man dependent on plants and animals.

(4) Spiders and insects in the neighbourhood; recognition, their food, home habits; house-fly: from eggs, larva or maggot, pupa to the fly; the breeding places of the fly; fly the transporter of dirt and the carrier of disease; how to get rid of the flies that infest the home.

(5) Experiments to show the difference between air breathed in and air breathed out; nature of combustion; importance of ventilation.

(6) Pure and impure water. How to purify water, decantation, filtration and boiling.

(7) Cleanliness at home. Disposal of night-soil, cow-dung and filth. Their value as manures.

(8) Wholesome food and healthy eating habits. Proper sleep and exercises.

(9) See (7) of Grade I and (8) of Grade II, but in greater detail.

The most important and characteristic constellations and their fancied shapes.

Students should be encouraged to observe and draw the figures of the constellations. They should be asked to make their own groupings of the stars.

#### GRADE IV

(1) Plant physiology: leaves as organs of transpiration, respiration and carbon assimilation. Roots and their functions; root hairs, how water passes into the roots.

(2) The village pond: water birds, their food, habits, songs; where and how they nest; their migration.

(3) Insect life: the mosquito: from the wriggler to the mosquito; mosquito and health problems; where mosquitoes breed; malaria and its prevention; loss to the village community due to malaria. The bee and the ant; the division of work and social organization.

(4) Spiders, scorpions and snakes: the characteristics of spiders; how to distinguish them from insects; utility to man; destruction of harmful insects. Recognition of poisonous and non-poisonous snakes. Non-poisonous snakes as helpers of agriculturists. First-aid measures in case of scorpion- and snake-bite.

(5) The three states of matter: water as solid, liquid and gas; distillation and condensation.

(6) Experiments to show that air is a material, a gas occupying space; experiments to show that air has weight and causes pressure; experiments to show that gases, liquids and solids expand and contract with change in temperature; experiments to show how evaporation cools.

(7) Human physiology: the respiratory and the circulatory system. Common infectious and contagious diseases: cholera, plague, smallpox and malaria; how produced; how to prevent their spreading.

(8) See under (9) of Grade III.

A perusal of the extracts above shows how a child learns various subjects—arithmetic, physics, chemistry, botany, history (of India as well as of the world), geography, economics, civics, ethics, along with music, drawing and physical exercises—without the effort and drudgery involved in the present system and in a most natural, intelligent and active manner. Moreover, the knowledge gained is not a mere collection of unrelated and miscellaneous facts having no direct bearing on the boy's experiences or on his social life. He is enabled to understand his environment better and to react to it more intelligently, because his studies throw helpful light on the problems and conditions of life around him. He receives a practical and useful education along with the cultivation of his civic responsibilities and a love of his country.

## CHAPTER IX

# THE WARDHA EXPERIMENT

THE Wardha Scheme of education was conceived by Gandhiji at Segaoon near Wardha, and it was formulated by the Conference, and worked out by the Committee at Wardha. It is, therefore, in the fitness of things that experimentation should first be carried out at Wardha itself, in an atmosphere influenced by the ideas and ideals of Mahatmaji. The Government of the Central Provinces (wherein both Segaoon and Wardha are situated) have taken to the Wardha Scheme with great zeal. With the hearty co-operation and active support of this Government, therefore, the experiment is being conducted in Wardha of running a Training School, as well as a Practising School attached thereto, on the exact lines of the Wardha system.

As it is felt that, without at least a brief account of that practical experiment, this book would be incomplete as a study of the Wardha Scheme, it is proposed to give in this chapter an idea of what is being done there. By doing so, two purposes can be served: first to examine how far the theoretical explanations given in the previous chapters find corroboration in the actual practical experiment that is now being made at Wardha, and, secondly, to enable other Provincial Governments to see how to take the first steps in introducing the scheme in their respective provinces and also to draw inspiration from the forward policy

of the C.P. Government *vis-a-vis* the Wardha Scheme.

## I. The Training School

(a) *Administration.* What the C.P. Government have done is to transform the old Normal School into the Wardha type of Training School. It is now called 'Vidya Mandir Training School', as it is at present training pupil-teachers (of secondary grade) specially for the running of the 'Vidya Mandir' schools<sup>1</sup> which the C.P. Government propose to open in January 1939. After April 1939 the school will be called 'Wardha Training School', preparing teachers for the Wardha schools. With the new orientation and reorganization of the institution, the Government appointed a special committee which is 'responsible for advising the Provincial Government regarding the management of the Vidya Mandir Training School and the policy to be pursued in respect of staff, equipment and academic matters'. 'The administrative control of the school will be in the hands of the Superintendent of the School, subject to the general control of the Director of Public Instruction, exercised through the District Inspector of Schools, Wardha.'

The committee, it is interesting to note, consists of four officials and five non-officials. The four officials are the Superintendent of the School (as Secretary), the District Inspector of Schools, the officer on special duty for Wardha Education in the C.P., and another special officer, called the Organizer of Vidya Mandir schools. The non-officials are five of the local members

<sup>1</sup> The appendix at the end of this chapter explains what is meant by 'Vidya Mandir' schools.

of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh, viz., Acharya Kaka Kalelkar, Acharya Vinoba, Srikrishnadas Juju, Srimathi Asha Devi, and Sri E. W. Aryanayakam (as Chairman). The management of the school is *practically* in the hands of this committee.

On the recommendation of this committee, the C.P. Government have transferred to other institutions some members of the Normal School, who have no aptitude for craftwork or are too old to adapt themselves to the ideology of the Wardha system, and new teachers with special aptitudes have been appointed instead, both for the training section and for the practising school.

**(b) Training Courses.** The institution is having different training courses for different types of people. At the very beginning, there was a very short course of fifteen days, which was attended by officers deputed by different Provincial Governments—4 by North-West Frontier Province, 2 by Bihar, 3 by Orissa, and 5 by Bombay—as well as by the whole staff of the Wardha Training School. This course was also attended by two from the Madras Province—one sent by the Tinnevely District Board and the other from the Ramakrishna Mission School at Periyannayakanpalayam in Coimbatore district. The course consisted of (1) the basic principles of the Wardha method of education, (2) the process of starting training schools, and (3) the drawing up of a syllabus. This short course will be repeated in January 1939 for the benefit of principals of training schools and inspectors of schools deputed for training.

Two other courses of training are now being given. One is conducted specially for teachers who have already been trained under the old system and have

sufficient teaching experience; another is for those who have accepted the ideology of the Wardha system and are, therefore, interested in the scheme. Seven teachers deputed by the Orissa Government and three by the Madras Government are now attending this course. After their return, it is expected that they will be employed by their respective Governments to open Wardha Training Schools. The course consists of teaching the general principles of the Wardha Scheme and its methodology, and the practice of the crafts of spinning and cardboard work. I had the good fortune to be present in Wardha on the day on which Acharya Vinoba gives his weekly lecture to this group, and it was very instructive and interesting to hear him explaining how Mathematics and General Science are to be correlated with the craft of spinning.

The other course—a fuller course—is attended by the pupil-teachers recruited by the C.P. Government. There are 160 of these, divided into six classes—three of them Marathi-speaking and three Hindustani-speaking—Marathi and Hindustani being the two predominant languages of the Central Provinces and Berar. They are having a special training course of eight months, which will enable them to teach the first two ‘grades’ (standards) of a Wardha school. The time-table of this training section (facing this page) indicates the distribution of time among the various subjects of study. After their training, they will be employed by the Government to teach in the Vidya Mandir schools that will be opened in January 1939. After two years of teaching (called ‘fieldwork’) they will return to the Training School for one more year of training in order to fit themselves to teach up to the fourth grade in a

Wardha school. Next year (1939-40) a number of *trained* teachers with aptitude for craftwork will be sent by the C.P. Government for a six-months' training course, after which they will go back to their respective schools and help to convert them into Wardha schools. From next year onwards the C.P. Government will not take pupil-teachers for the present system of training, and the training school will be a purely Wardha Training School.

## II. The Practising School

There are seven standards in the Practising School or the Model Section of the Training School. Of these, only the first two standards are now working under the Wardha system; and the remainder, at present following the old system, will be gradually converted into the Wardha type when an adequate number of Wardha-trained teachers are available.

I watched for a considerable time the teaching in the first grade. The teacher explained the process of spinning, and at the same time correlated arithmetic, mother-tongue, geography and science with the basic craft of spinning on the takli. The pupils were seven years old and were 18 in number. They were all active and alert. They did not yet know how to write, but they could read the figures written on the blackboard, and make calculations of the counts of yarn they spun and point out on the board the figure representing the sum total of yarn spun by each in one day, or two days, or three days. Then they started music, and later went out into the open air for action songs and games. I could well realize that it was an 'activity-curriculum' that they followed under the Wardha



*Carding Class*

## WARDHA TRAINING SCHOOL

*Finding out the count of yarn*





*Open-air Class: Designing and Drawing*

## WARDHA TRAINING SCHOOL

*Cardboard Work*



system. The children were quite happy and cheerful and active. I saw there nothing of the 'child labour' or 'factory labour' spoken of by critics of the Wardha Scheme.

### III. Productive Manual Work

I examined the question of the productive character of the manual work turned out by the different sets of students. The figures were an agreeable surprise even to an admirer of the scheme like myself.

(i) In the cardboard section of the pupil-teachers' class, during the first four months of the course, working on an average 2 hours a day, the average net profit of a pupil-teacher while under training was one rupee a month, after deducting the cost of the materials and wastage. They had made 750 models, of which 650 had already been sold to visitors, yielding an income of Rs. 125. And what they produced were beautiful and useful articles of artistic design, such as boxes of different sizes and shapes, covered with coloured and flowered khadder, blotting pads, letter pads, office files, portfolios, albums, book covers, pen-cases, pencil and pin trays, etc. It is calculated that the cardboard section of Wardha schools, when in full working order all over the province, will be able to supply all the cardboard stationery needed by the various offices of the C.P. Government throughout the province.

(ii) In the Practising School or Model Section, the children of the first grade (7 years *plus*) gave me a pleasant surprise. According to the calculations in the *Report* of the Zakir Husain Committee, it was expected that, after nine months' experience of spinning, calculated at the rate of 288 working days a year, each pupil

would earn only Rs. 2-9-0 a year, while in this school, in the very first class, the average earning was actually found to be Rs. 3 a year, working for  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours a day, for 28 days a month, and for only 270 days. Naturally, with increased experience and skill on the part of teachers and of pupils, they could earn much more. The sixth and seventh grades will be more than self-supporting, and taking the whole course of seven years, education could well be made self-supporting to the extent of meeting teachers' salaries as expected by Gandhiji.

#### **IV. Attainments of Pupils**

With reference to the attainments of the pupils, I noticed a distinct improvement over our present system of education. As regards the subject-matter of their study, they were found to be quite up to the mark, if not a little better. And as regards their interest in study, concentration of attention, activity, alertness and health, there was a perceptible improvement over the present system.

What struck me as the most important results of the experiment are the following:

(i) Reading, writing, drawing and the mother-tongue were learnt by children in a most interesting manner, while their little hands were busy with the takli. What a great change! Instead of receiving knowledge in a purely theoretical and uninteresting way as hitherto, now the boy's hand and eye and brain were found to be active in recording useful information in his mind. Recitation and singing, dialogues and dramas, action songs and games were made to fit in usefully and intelligently so that he could have a change and could

rest his hands in between the periods of craftwork. In fact, the boys were not even conscious that they were learning any dreaded school subjects, so absorbed and interested they appeared in their handwork and in the pleasant conversational method of teaching the subjects.

(ii) In the matter of discipline, what a contrast to the present system! Today a teacher, particularly of the lower classes, has to waste a lot of his or her time and energy in making children sit still and not fidget about. In the Wardha school there is no need for enforced discipline or for scolding and punishing children. Boys are by nature restless, and, if they often turn mischievous, it is because the present system does not give them an adequate outlet for their pent-up youthful energy. Sitting still with folded hands, listening endlessly to a teacher, is something unnatural. In the Wardha school, their handwork gives them a natural outlet for their energy, and they unconsciously co-operate with the teacher in maintaining discipline and order and quiet. Instead of the usual type of lazy and inattentive boys, I saw a whole class of active and attentive children—active and attentive in a most natural and unconscious manner.<sup>1</sup>

(iii) In the case of the pupil-teachers too, I noticed a marvellous change. Even a bad teacher became a good teacher under the Wardha training. The new method of training is itself the best educator of the

<sup>1</sup> An English lady—Director of St Christopher's Nursery Training College, Tonbridge Wells, Kent (England)—was with me when I visited the classes, and she remarked to me that this Wardha system was even superior to the Montessori method—a valuable testimony from an entirely independent and disinterested authority on the subject.

teacher. Working with head, hand and eye, his whole personality is built up. Under this system he becomes alert and active, watchful and eager, and, what is more, in the process of training, unconsciously he becomes really interested in his vocation and in his young pupils. Even bad material has become good under the Wardha training. A wonderful transformation in the pupil-teacher under training is a feature of the Wardha Training School which no visitor can escape observing. These facts ought to remove any doubt as to the success of the system and as to the possibility of solving the problem of finding the thousands of suitable teachers needed for hundreds of Wardha schools.

After my visit to the Wardha Training School, I have only to corroborate what Srimati Kamolini Sircar, after a stay of one month in the school, wrote recently in *The Hindu* (November 20, 1938):

Those responsible for thinking out and planning this scheme have achieved two great results from their labours. In the first place, they have devised a system of education which is sound, wholesome and healthy from every point of view, psychological, physical, mental, social and economic.

Secondly, they have found a method whereby basic education can be available to the masses in our villages<sup>1</sup> at a minimum cost to the State. Rural schools can be organized through the length and breadth of our great land, because the new schools will become educationally creative in the economic wealth of the State, and instead of becoming a financial burden to the Government, will themselves bear their cost to some extent.

<sup>1</sup> Why only in our *villages*? Also in our towns; the Wardha scheme is not exclusively for the villages (see p. 82 *ante*).

As I see it, the new Wardha Scheme of rural education is going to usher a new era into our villages<sup>1</sup> providing a solution for the educational as well as economic needs.

The new scheme will help to drive away illiteracy, poverty, disease, dirt, insanitation, indebtedness and many other ills which prevail in our villages.

All who wish to see India go forward in progress without the present terrible handicaps in the villages, will not only rejoice, but be deeply grateful to Mahatma Gandhi and his band of selfless workers, who are giving of their best unstintingly to devise a system of national education. May their efforts be richly blessed and crowned with success.

In the light of what one sees in this experiment at Wardha there is no room for any more doubt as to the soundness and feasibility of the Wardha Scheme. To those who still entertain any doubt, I can only recommend a visit to Wardha to see with their own eyes the successful working of the Wardha system of education.

## A P P E N D I X

### *The Vidya Mandir School*

Some confusion has arisen in the minds of the public over the meaning of the two expressions—'Vidya Mandir School' and 'Wardha School'. In this appendix I shall endeavour to make their meanings clear.

By a 'Wardha School' is meant, as must be clear from the foregoing chapters, a school wherein the curriculum followed is the one adopted for basic

<sup>1</sup> In our *country*—villages and towns—because the system is one of 'basic national education', for the *whole* nation, on a nation-wide scale.

national education by the Wardha Conference and worked out by the Zakir Husain Committee. It may be managed and administered by any body—the Government, or a Local Board, or private management either of an individual or of a society or an organization. One of the ways of managing or administering such a school is the 'Vidya Mandir Scheme', and if a Wardha school is managed under the Vidya Mandir Scheme, the school is called a 'Vidya Mandir School'. Thus a school may be called, from the point of view of its *curriculum*, a 'Wardha School', and the same school, if it has the Vidya Mandir Scheme *management*, will be called a 'Vidya Mandir School'. What, then, is this new type of management under the Vidya Mandir Scheme?

First, let us see the meaning of the expression 'Vidya Mandir'. 'Vidya' means, in Sanskrit, 'knowledge', and 'Mandir' literally means a house or building, and in some of the Indian languages the word is extended to include temples. Hence 'Vidya Mandir' means a house or temple of knowledge. This is the special expression adopted by the C.P. Government to denote this particular type of *organization or management*, and there are different ideas going to constitute its conception:

(i) Some generous soul donates a piece of land, sufficient to yield an annual income of Rs. 200, which sum is equivalent to the pay of a teacher in the Vidya Mandir School. These schools will have, for the present, only four classes (I-IV), with about 60 pupils in all, and will have only two teachers, each teacher taking up two classes of about 30 pupils. The pay of one of the two teachers is to be met by the annual yield of the land (Rs. 200), and the other teacher is to be paid out of the income from the sale of the products of the four classes. When the school is complete with all the seven standards, each of the

additional teachers will be maintained by the students of each of the additional classes (V-VII), which will be possible because of the advanced nature of their craftwork and, therefore, the greater income from each of the higher classes.

(ii) The C.P. Government have, for the present, set apart two lakhs of rupees for starting two Vidya Mandir schools in each tahsil or taluk, i.e., a total of 160 schools in the whole Province. This sum is intended to meet the expenses connected with (1) the training of the necessary number of teachers, (2) the putting up of buildings for the 160 schools to be opened, and (3) the salary of the two teachers in each of the schools during the first year when the land will not be yielding, being under preparation for cultivation.

(iii) The Department of Agriculture of the C.P. Government will be in charge of its cultivation during the first three years, until the cultivation of the land can be entrusted to any other body.

(iv) Meanwhile, local education committees, called 'Vidya Mandir Committees' will be formed by the Government in each of the areas served by these schools. Each of the committees will consist of the donor of the land and a few others of the locality who are interested in the school. These committees will manage the cultivation of the lands and the administration of the schools, and they will eventually be constituted into a 'Vidya Mandir Trust' for the whole Province.

It must be noted that a complete Wardha school (whether organized under the Vidya Mandir Scheme or managed otherwise) is to have seven standards according to the Wardha Scheme. For the present, however, owing to the Government's lack of financial resources and the want of an adequate number of specially trained teachers, and because of the Government's

desire to make a beginning without further delay, the Vidya Mandir schools will have only four classes (I-IV). Some of them will soon have the other standards (V-VII) added so as to become complete seven-standard schools, and will then have the status of 'central schools' to which the other, four-standard schools will act as feeder schools. Several of these will gradually become complete central schools, while the rest, being in areas with fewer school-going children, will only continue to be feeder schools.

Such are the plans of the C.P. Government to make a beginning in introducing the Wardha Scheme and to make steady progress along the line as adequate funds and trained teachers become available for increasing the number of standards in each school and for increasing the number of Wardha schools in the Province. That the C.P. Government have taken the matter up in a most serious and businesslike manner is evident from the fact that two special provincial officers have been appointed—one called Officer on special duty for Wardha Education, and the other called Organizer of Vidya Mandir Schools.

## CHAPTER X

# CONCLUSION

### I. Originality of the Scheme

FROM the foregoing exposition and examination of the Wardha Scheme it will be seen that the scheme taken as a whole is an original one. No doubt, if we analyse it into its component parts, each part may not be found to be entirely original.

The principle of learning by doing is a sound pedagogical idea as old as Aristotle, for it is based on the very nature of that rational animal, 'compost of earth and heaven', called man, who can acquire ideas only through the medium of sense perceptions, senses being the windows of the mind and the heart. It was, however, only in the nineteenth century that this principle was applied to education on any systematic scale, when Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi led the reaction against the over-intellectualistic school in his epoch-making book *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children*, published in 1801. In this work he showed that education must start from observation, and proceed from observation to consciousness, from consciousness to speech and thence to measuring, drawing, number, and reckoning. This method was further developed by Frederich Froebel and Maria Montessori, who won for it much of the popularity it now enjoys. The 'Project Method' is the nearest ancestor of Gandhiji's plan, for it consists in making education centre round a 'project' or plan.

There is, however, a great difference between the two methods in so far as the 'project' is not necessarily a handicraft which will later on be a bread-winning occupation, and the child is not educated *through* the 'project', but only *around* it. Something like the Wardha method is being used in the rural schools of Germany and Denmark, where children are taught history, geography, science and literature, not for their own sakes but only in so far as they are necessary to understand their own village, its industries, its agricultural products, and the social and political problems of its inhabitants.

Secondly, the great emphasis laid on manual training and the dignity of labour and the idea of every one supporting himself by his own personal labour, are other ingredients of the Wardha Scheme and these are the fruits of the inspiration of the Tolstoy Farm school which, in its turn, as already pointed out, was an adaptation of the ideas and life of the Trappist monasteries. But credit must be given to the genius of Mahatmaji who has improved upon the medieval system; for, while the latter insisted on manual training, it did not develop the whole man through crafts. This idea is truly original.

Thus the ingredients of the Wardha system were there in the world scattered about, and the real originality of Gandhiji and his cleverness lie in picking up a stone here and a stone there and welding them together into a big and effective stone with which, as in his khadi and Harijan movements, he proposes to kill more than the proverbial two birds. (Unfortunately this metaphor smells of violence and not *ahimsa*; it has, nevertheless, to be used because it is just the

expression in the English language which brings out the meaning clearly.) In other words, Gandhiji aims at solving many problems with this system of education.

## II. Benefits of the Scheme

What, then, are the many birds that can be secured by this huge stone? What are the many problems which are to be solved by this great and novel educational venture? Already while explaining the scheme in the foregoing chapters, several benefits have been incidentally referred to. There are some more outstanding benefits which may be pointed out here.

(a) *Liquidation of illiteracy.* One of the grave problems that stare us in the face today is the problem of the appalling illiteracy in the country. We have discovered that, while the number of primary schools in British India had increased in the following proportion:

1917	...	142,203
1922	...	163,072
1927	...	189,248
1931	...	204,250

and the money directly spent on primary education in British India had increased at the handsome rate of

1917	...	Rs. 2.97	crores
1922	...	„ 5.09	„
1927	...	„ 6.95	„
1931	...	„ 7.95	„

the percentage of literates in British India had only increased from 7.5% in 1917 to 8.6% in 1931! As the editor of *The New Review* from whose learned article on 'Light from Wardha' the above figures are taken,

There is, however, a great difference between the two methods in so far as the 'project' is not necessarily a handicraft which will later on be a bread-winning occupation, and the child is not educated *through* the 'project', but only *around* it. Something like the Wardha method is being used in the rural schools of Germany and Denmark, where children are taught history, geography, science and literature, not for their own sakes but only in so far as they are necessary to understand their own village, its industries, its agricultural products, and the social and political problems of its inhabitants.

Secondly, the great emphasis laid on manual training and the dignity of labour and the idea of every one supporting himself by his own personal labour, are other ingredients of the Wardha Scheme and these are the fruits of the inspiration of the Tolstoy Farm school which, in its turn, as already pointed out, was an adaptation of the ideas and life of the Trappist monasteries. But credit must be given to the genius of Mahatmaji who has improved upon the medieval system; for, while the latter insisted on manual training, it did not develop the whole man through crafts. This idea is truly original.

Thus the ingredients of the Wardha system were there in the world scattered about, and the real originality of Gandhiji and his cleverness lie in picking up a stone here and a stone there and welding them together into a big and effective stone with which, as in his khadi and Harijan movements, he proposes to kill more than the proverbial two birds. (Unfortunately this metaphor smells of violence and not *ahimsa*; it has, nevertheless, to be used because it is just the

expression in the English language which brings out the meaning clearly.) In other words, Gandhiji aims at solving many problems with this system of education.

## II. Benefits of the Scheme

What, then, are the many birds that can be secured by this huge stone? What are the many problems which are to be solved by this great and novel educational venture? Already while explaining the scheme in the foregoing chapters, several benefits have been incidentally referred to. There are some more outstanding benefits which may be pointed out here.

(a) *Liquidation of illiteracy.* One of the grave problems that stare us in the face today is the problem of the appalling illiteracy in the country. We have discovered that, while the number of primary schools in British India had increased in the following proportion:

1917	...	142,203
1922	...	163,072
1927	...	189,248
1931	...	204,250

and the money directly spent on primary education in British India had increased at the handsome rate of

1917	...	Rs. 2.97 crores
1922	...	„ 5.09 „
1927	...	„ 6.95 „
1931	...	„ 7.95 „

the percentage of literates in British India had only increased from 7.5% in 1917 to 8.6% in 1931! As the editor of *The New Review* from whose learned article on 'Light from Wardha' the above figures are taken,

puts it: 'Allowing for due caution in trusting official figures on an elusive subject like literacy, here surely was something to make any Indian weep . . . we need many more—if possible all—who can read and write and count and take an intelligent interest in the world around, if *swaraj*<sup>1</sup> is to be more than a dream. This means a huge outlay on schools and teachers—a figure which has frightened every province that has so far even approached the question of universal elementary education. Where is this money to come from?'

The answer to this pertinent question is the Wardha Scheme of education. Only with this well-conceived scheme of Gandhiji's can we hope to fulfil our obligations to the nation in this respect, in a given time during this generation.

(b) *Free elementary and secondary education.* That the Wardha Scheme comprises both elementary and secondary education has already been explained. Parents getting so much *free* education for their children is another of the boons that the scheme confers on the country. There is, however, one point of view which may be examined in this connexion. A certain writer has said:

The chief obstacle in the way of the education of children is the apathy of their parents. Would this apathy not be increased, instead of being cured, by the State educating their children without their help? It is much better policy, psychologically no less than financially to make parents pay *something*, however

<sup>1</sup> *Swaraj* means independence of the country, the root meaning of this Sanskrit word being self-government.

little, for their children's education. Most men do not appreciate what they do not pay for, and the only way to interest parents in their children's education is to make them make some little sacrifice for it. A few measures of rice or *dhal*, a few annas, levied as fees every month would go some way towards the teacher's pay and the cost of books . . . the parent must feel a practical interest in his child's schooling, a practical sense of his right and duty as a parent.

There is some truth in this view. In fact, some leaders like Sri S. Satyamurti have already said that, while education ought to be compulsory and universal, it need not be free to everybody. When the State is hard up for money for educational expansion, why not allow such parents as can afford it, to pay something by way of fees for the education of their children? No doubt poor children ought to be given free education, but why should it be free to the children of rich parents? In answer to this question may I not point out the difficulty of making discrimination when there will be many more children to be educated under a universal compulsory system? Perhaps the best plan both for the purpose of making parents realize their duty and for finding adequate finances for the State would be the enforcement of an education cess in proportion to the income of the parents. A direct and special tax like this might meet the point raised by the writer.

(c) *Poverty of Indian villages.* The proverbial poverty of the Indian village is well known, and it is this poverty that is the root cause of the migration of people from villages to towns and cities. The Wardha Scheme kills this bird too. The revival of village economic and industrial life is one of the main purposes

of the Wardha Scheme, and it is the only satisfactory solution of the problem of poverty in our villages.

(d) *Practical Education*. It is an admitted fact that there are three fundamental defects in the present system of education, viz., it is too literary or bookish and not sufficiently practical; it does not lead to any particular vocation after eleven years of education; and it keeps the boy divorced from his environment and trains him for a somewhat artificial life. The Wardha system is so planned that it eradicates all these evils. This is the *one* scheme best calculated to remove these defects. The child will cease to be, from one point of view, a gramophone record reproducing his master's voice, and from another point of view, a beast of burden carrying a load of textbooks and exercise books.

The present system of education is 'book-centred' while the Wardha system is 'child-centred', 'craft-centred', and 'teacher-centred'. *Child-centred*, because all teaching will be through concrete life situations relating to the child's social and physical environment, so that whatever the child learns becomes assimilated into his growing personality instead of, as at present, being a mere collection of unrelated facts having no direct bearing on children's experiences or on social life. *Craft-centred*, because all knowledge is to be learnt through the craft and all the child's powers are to be drawn out and developed through craftwork. And *teacher-centred*, because the teacher is to play a more important and active part in the process of education and because the success of the scheme depends considerably on the knowledge, skill, enthusiasm and patriotism of the teacher.

Here is a system which combines together the school of liberal education and the school of vocational training, by maintaining a judicious balance between the two ideals, by giving vocational training without losing sight of the cultural side of education, and thus producing a happy blend of both.

### III. Imprimatur of the Congress

A system of education claiming to be a basic *national* education ought to have the approval, not only of educational experts, but also of the nation, expressed through its largest and most representative political organization. It is no wonder, therefore, that the question of adopting the Wardha Scheme for the whole nation came under the purview of the Indian National Congress. The subject was placed on the agenda of the Haripura session of the Congress in February 1938, and the Congress passed the following resolution:

The Congress has emphasized the importance of national education ever since 1906, and during the non-co-operation period many national educational institutions were started under its auspices. The Congress attaches the utmost importance to a proper organization of mass education and holds that all national progress ultimately depends on the method and content and objective of the education that is provided for the people. The existing system of education in India is admitted to have failed. Its objectives have been anti-national and anti-social, its methods have been antiquated, and it has been confined to a small number of people and has left the vast majority of our people illiterate. It is essential therefore to build up national education on a new foundation and on a

nation-wide scale. As the Congress is having new opportunities of service and of influencing and controlling state education, it is necessary to lay down the basic principles which should guide such education and to take other necessary steps to give effect to them.

The Congress is of opinion that for the primary and secondary stages a basic education should be imparted in accordance with the following principles:

(i) Free and compulsory education should be provided for seven years on a nation-wide scale.

(ii) The medium of instruction must be the mother-tongue.

(iii) Throughout this period education should centre round some form of manual and productive work, and all other activities to be developed and training to be given should, as far as possible, be integrally related to the central handicraft chosen with due regard to the environment of the child.

Accordingly, the Congress is of opinion that an All-India Education Board to deal with this basic part of education be established, and for this purpose requests and authorizes Dr Zakir Husain and Sri E. W. Aryanayakam to take immediate steps, under the advice and guidance of Gandhiji, to bring such a Board into existence, in order to work out in a consolidated manner a programme of basic national education and to recommend it for acceptance to those who are in control of State or private education.

The said Board shall have power to frame its own constitution, to raise funds and perform all such acts as may be necessary for the fulfilment of its objects.

It will be seen that, though substantially the same, there is some difference between this comprehensive

resolution of the Haripura Congress and the resolutions of the Wardha Conference.<sup>1</sup> In the Congress resolution there is no direct reference to the self-supporting character of the scheme, which, according to Gandhiji and the Wardha Conference, is one of the fundamental features of the scheme. In the Haripura resolution we miss the fourth resolution of the Wardha Conference: 'That the Conference expects that this system of education will be gradually able to cover the remuneration of the teachers.' However, that the Congress has not completely overlooked this aspect of the basic education may be inferred from the fact that in its resolution occurs the expression 'some form of manual and *productive* work'. With this little difference of emphasis on its self-supporting character, the Congress has given its imprimatur to the Wardha Scheme. That the Haripura Congress is in substantial agreement with the Wardha Conference and that the scheme when finally applied will not materially differ from the scheme as worked out by the Wardha Committee, are obvious from two facts, viz., (i) the two persons entrusted by the Congress with the task of taking immediate steps to establish an All-India Education Board to deal with the basic part of education are Dr Zakir Husain and Sri E. W. Arayanayakam, the Chairman and Convener respectively of the Wardha Committee, and (ii) they are to work 'under the advice and guidance of Gandhiji'. These points in the Haripura Congress resolution ensure the continuity of policy initiated by Gandhiji, formulated by him at the Wardha Conference, and worked out by Dr Zakir Husain and his committee.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 7 *ante* for the resolutions of the Wardha Conference.

#### **IV. Support of the Central Advisory Board of Education**

Though the Congress is the most influential and powerful political party in the country, the educational policy and programme of the State are to be finally chalked out by educational experts of the Government of the country. Therefore the Wardha Scheme required not only the support of the Congress, but also the aid of the educational experts of the Government. Accordingly, the Central Advisory Board of Education, Delhi, (created by the Government of India for co-ordinating and guiding the educational policy and programme of the Provincial Governments and for serving the useful purpose of a clearing house of educational ideas and opinions in the country) took up the matter in its hands for examination and advice. At its meeting held in January 1938 (therefore, prior to the Haripura Congress in February 1938) the Board appointed a committee under the chairmanship of the Honble Sri B. G. Kher, Premier and Minister for Education, Government of Bombay, 'to examine the scheme of educational reconstruction incorporated in the Wardha Scheme, in the light of the *Wood-Abbot Report on General and Vocational Education* and of other relevant documents'. This committee, called the Kher Committee, met in Simla on 28, 29 and 30 June 1938, and after a careful scrutiny of the Wardha Scheme, formulated its unanimous conclusions in a report which is an important document containing a thorough analysis and a critical examination of the ideas and principles underlying the Wardha Scheme.

This report was considered by the Central Advisory Board of Education at its meeting held in New Delhi on December 3, 1938. It is gratifying to know that this Board has given its general approval to the conclusions of the Kher Committee. This report has cleared misconceptions which had gathered round the scheme as I have already pointed out in the earlier chapters, particularly regarding the emphasis on the self-supporting character of the scheme, the subordination of culture to craft, the scheme as a solution of the problem of unemployment, and the neglect of religious education and of the English language. In fact, the report has helped to clear misconceptions and to clarify the issues raised by the Wardha Scheme. The following are the recommendations of the committee, which have met with the general approval of the Central Advisory Board of Education:

(1) The scheme of 'basic' education should first be introduced in rural areas.

(2) The age range for compulsion should be 6 to 14 years, but children can be admitted to the 'basic' school at the age of 5.

(3) Diversion of students from the 'basic' school to other kinds of school should be allowed after Class V or about the age of 11 plus.

(4) The medium of instruction should be the language of the province.

(5) A common language for India is desirable. This should be Hindustani with both the Urdu and Hindi scripts. Option should be given to children to choose the script and provision should be made for teaching them in that script. Every teacher should know both scripts, viz., Urdu and Hindi.

(6) The Wardha Scheme of basic education is in

full agreement with the recommendations made in the *Wood-Abbot Report* so far as the principle of learning by doing is concerned. This activity should be of many kinds in the lower classes and later should lead to a basic craft the produce from which should be saleable and the proceeds applied to the upkeep of the school.

(7) In the lowest classes education should be carried on through the activities.

(8) Certain elements of cultural subjects cannot be correlated with the basic craft, and must be taught independently.

(9) The training of teachers should be reorganized and their status raised.

(10) No teacher should receive less than Rs. 20 per mensem.

(11) Efforts should be made to recruit more women teachers.

(12) Basic schools should be started only when suitable trained teachers are available.

(13) The curriculum will need revision in the light of experience.

(14) English should not be introduced as an optional subject in basic schools.

(15) The State should provide facilities for every community to give religious teaching.

(16) No external examinations need be held. At the end of the basic school course a leaving certificate based on an internal examination should be given.

(17) Pupils wishing to join other schools at the age of about 11 plus should also be granted a leaving certificate.

(18) Promotion from class to class will be determined by the school, though the results of the internal examinations should be subject to the supervisors' inspection.

In the course of this interesting report, there are certain observations made by the committee which deserve to be considered. As regards the position of English in the scheme of basic national education, the report says:

The committee agree that the demand for English will be met by the transfer after Class V or about the age of 11 plus to schools where English is taught and that English should not be included in the curriculum of 'basic' Wardha schools.

And as regards the productive manual work too, there is a noteworthy observation in the report, which thrusts the self-supporting character of the scheme into the background. The report says:

The fundamental principle of the Wardha Scheme is education through productive craft activity. Perhaps the word 'creative' would be preferred to 'productive' by educationists as the word 'productive' may be and has been read to imply that economic production outweighs educative development. We emphasize that the Wardha Scheme stresses the educative value of craftwork. That saleable material will be produced in the higher classes of the basic schools is no objection to the scheme. Indeed, unless saleable material is produced the educative possibilities have not been satisfactorily exploited. The income from the sale of such material might well be applied to the upkeep of the school.

The recommendations of the committee, even with the approval of the Central Advisory Board of Education, I should like to point out, do not become mandatory on the Provincial Governments; they are but advisory—in the nature of advice given, of course, by an authoritative body of those interested in educational

problems. It is now left to the Provincial Governments so to reorientate their educational policy and programme in the light of these recommendations, and it is hoped that the Provincial Departments of Education will keep in mind these recommendations when carrying out the scheme of basic national education with such modifications in non-essentials as are dictated by the special circumstances of their respective provinces.

## **V. Hope and Appeal**

Let me close this study of the Wardha Scheme of education and the interpretation of Gandhiji's ideas and ideals, with the hope and the appeal, which he himself made in the very first article of his on the subject in the *Harijan* of July 31, 1937:

This is not a fanciful picture. If we would but shed our mental laziness, it would appear to be an eminently reasonable and practical solution of the problem of education that faces the Congress Ministers and therefore the Congress. If the declarations recently made on behalf of the British Government mean what they should to the ear, the Ministers have the organizing and organized ability of the Civil Service at their disposal to execute their policy. The services have learnt the art of reducing to practise the policies laid down for them. . . . Let the Ministers lay down a well-conceived but determined policy, and let the services redeem the promise made on their behalf and prove worthy of the salt they eat.

Let us not be men of little faith, of little sympathy, of little courage, and of little vision. With a firm faith in the scheme, with greater sympathy for the suffering millions, with more courage in our own powers and with a clearer vision of our future, let us take a bold

step and then persevere in our path of duty towards the country. The new national governments established in the Congress Provinces owe a duty to the nation in the matter of educational reorientation and expansion, and let them discharge this important and imperative duty by spreading, on a nation-wide scale, this system of national education, originated by our great national leader and hero for the good and glory of our beloved Motherland.



